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APRIL 1993

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The Magazine of the Macabre and Fantastic



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**EDITOR:** Allan Bryce  
**ASSISTANT EDITOR:** Richard Marshall  
**EDITORIAL ASSISTANT:** Norman Taylor  
**PUBLISHER:** Ken Mills  
**DESIGNER:** Lindy Bryce  
**FINANCIAL CONTROLLER:** Michele Mills  
**ADVERTISEMENT MANAGER:** Jerry Thompson  
**CLASSIFIED SALES EXECUTIVE:** Amber Lewis  
**PRODUCTION MANAGER:** Gemma Willis  
**PRODUCTION DIRECTOR:** Paul Mills

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**COVER SHOT: -**  
**PHOTOGRAPHY:** Chris Bell  
**ART DIRECTION:** Nigel Wingrove  
**MAKE-UP:** Duncan Jarman  
**MODEL:** Eileen Daly

**FOR ADVERTISING ENQUIRIES PHONE:**  
**JERRY THOMPSON ON: 0579 340400**  
**FAX: 0579 340200**

# THE DARK SIDE

The Magazine of the Macabre and Fantastic

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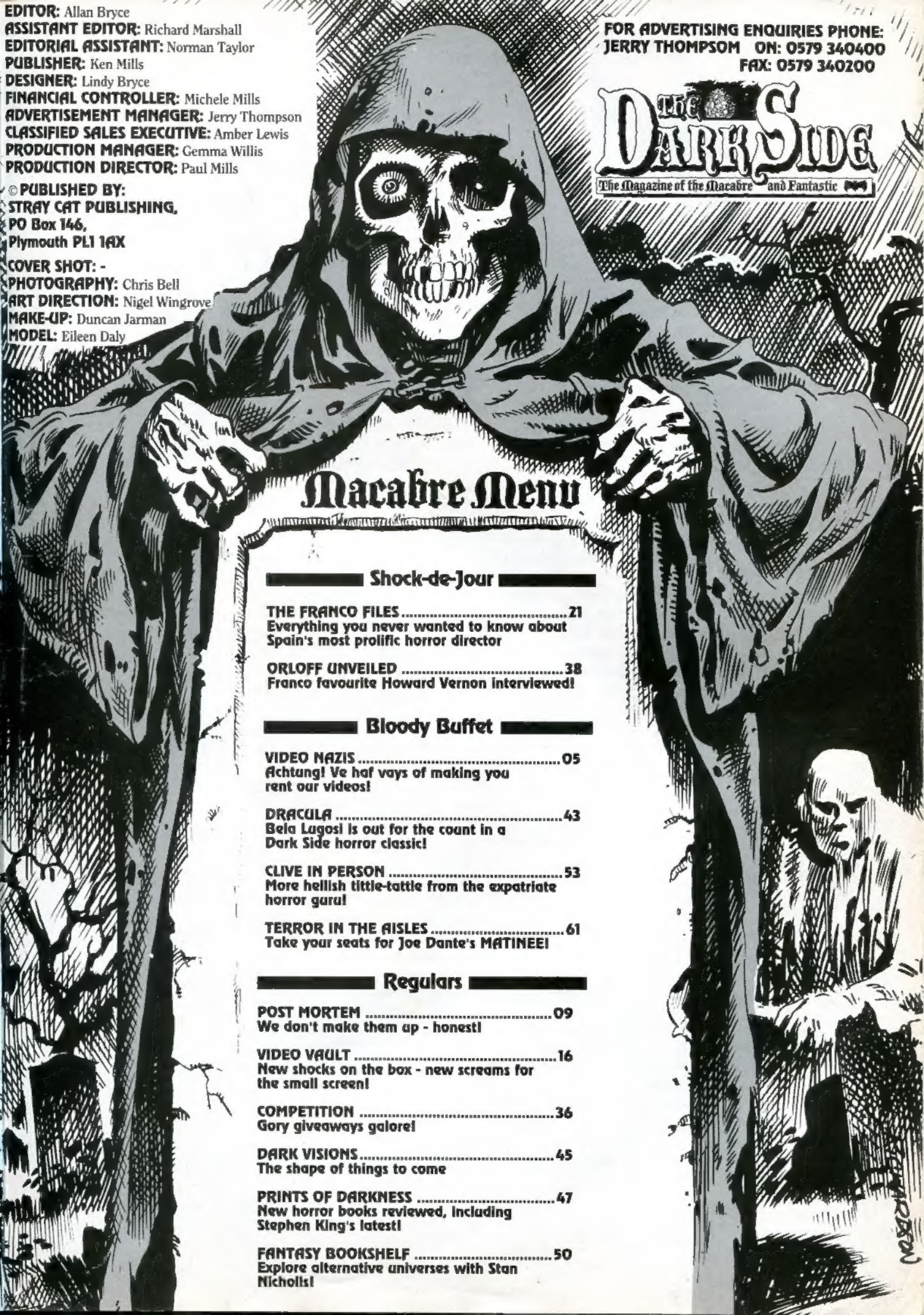
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# THE DARK SIDE

The Magazine of the Macabre and Fantastic

## Introduction

**T**he legendary Harry Alan Towers once said to me that (Jesus) Jess Franco was a jazz musician who played the trombone until he discovered the zoom lens. Indeed, those who have seen some of Franco's movies can't fail to have noticed his endless zooming in and out with the camera, usually for no discernible reason. I must confess that in my early moviegoing days my spirits would always sink when Franco's moniker (or any one of his numerous pseudonyms) came up on the credits of a movie. In fact I've lost count of the times I've staggered out of a screening of some Franco abomination, loudly taking his Spanish first name in vain.

This begs the question, why do a special Jess Franco issue? The answer is simple. Some filmmakers produce terrific movies, from which it is impossible to dig up one decent still. Franco, on the other hand, makes lousy films, but the posters and stills from them are great. How could they not be, when his films all reflect his fascination with fetishist costumery and sexy women? Gotta love this guy, even if you don't. That is one of the reasons why Franco has been a popular subject in horror fanzines the world over for some years now.

But let's give credit where it's due. The fact remains that he has managed to make around 150 movies, a fair percentage of which fall into our favourite genre. Not only that, he has also been responsible for scripting, editing, and even writing the music for many of these - and he has written the novelisations of them! Some of those movies have been pretty good - **DIABOLICAL DR. Z** and **THE AWFUL DR. ORLOFF** spring most readily to mind - and all of them represent a break from the mainstream which becomes ever more refreshing as Hollywood continues to churn out endless computerised clones of past box office successes. It would be easy to dismiss Franco as just another hack, ducking and diving, and delivering anonymous exploitation quickies faster than a game of pass-the-parcel in a Belfast pub. But he is responsible for such a huge body of work that he would be impossible to ignore, even if we wanted to. Devoted fans of Franco films (they do exist!) cite the dreamlike qualities their hero frequently brings to his unconventional narratives, and in his lengthy feature on Franco, Cathal Tohill perceptively makes the point that Franco's movies are like improvised jazz riffs, playing tricks with traditional film form. Jazz is also an acquired taste. I'm a classical music man myself.

Elsewhere in our Franco special you will find an interview with Howard Vernon, sinister star of the Orloff movies and an actor who must be a real glutton for punishment - he's featured in some 30 Franco pictures! There's also a Franco filmography, which is as complete as any published anywhere. Mind you, Jess has probably made a dozen more movies while we've been waiting to go to press! So has all this renewed interest in the films of Jess Franco caused me to go back and re-evaluate some of my earlier, derisory opinions? Not really. I sat dumbstruck through Franco's **DRACULA**, **PRISONER OF FRANKENSTEIN** when it was shown on the telly last year, wondering what the heck to make of it. But I've still got about a hundred more to suffer through before I can consider myself an expert. Oh well, if you can't beat 'em, join 'em.

Jesus Franco Manera, come on down...



Allan Bryce.

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# VIDEO NAZIS!

When it comes to bad, bad taste there aren't that many exploitation epics that can top those goose-stepping Nazi flicks from the mid-Seventies. They're the ultimate in out-to-lunch sickness and depravity, and it's hardly surprising that the trusty censor should have singled them out to help promote the idea of the pernicious 'Video Nasty.' When censorship frenzy was in full swing, titles like *S.S. EXPERIMENT CAMP*, *GESTAPO'S LAST ORGY*, and *THE BEAST IN HEAT* were banded about as being prime examples of the vile bilge that was lurking in the nearest video store.

As usual the censor assumed that the vast majority of the video-renting public were feeble-brained half-wits, who could be indoctrinated into acts of extreme sadism by exposure to just one loathsome and laughable slice of exploitation. To be realistic, it seems highly unlikely that any mild-mannered film fan (or surveyor of the cinematic underbelly) will be transformed into a fascist fanatic after watching these S.S. epics. Fans of gore and shock cinema are after geek thrills and gonzo behaviour - something that mainstream TV and cinema just doesn't provide. In many ways the more the censor shouts 'No,' the more the fans want to cry 'Yes!' in retaliation.

The vile deeds of the power-hungry Nazi have always been a staple ingredient in exploitation and popular cinema. Early black and white serials such as *SPYSMASHER* (1942) and *SECRET SERVICE IN DARKEST AFRICA* (1943) had whip-wielding



**Achtung! Ve haf vays of making you buy ze Dark Side every month, and zis is one of them: an exclusive feature on nasty Nazi movies! Lucky Cathal Tohill is the first man over the wire into LOVE CAMP 7...**

villians a-plenty. Nearly forty years later, the latter serial was revitalized by Steven Spielberg as *RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK* - a Nazi movie that nobody wanted to ban!

Plenty of other films have capitalized on the aura of menace that surrounds any uniformed goose-stepper. Films such as *SHE DEMONS* (1958), *THE FROZEN DEAD* (1967), and *THEY SAVED HITLER'S BRAIN* (1963) all milked the fear of the fascist Hun to the full. In some films he was a stock villain, while in others it was his grisly real-life deeds that drew the audience in. It sounds unbelievable but there were plenty of people who paid to see Concentration Camp footage and other documentary atrocities. Films such as *HALF-WAY TO HELL* (1948) and *THE BEAST FROM THE EAST* are the best known exponents of this grisly genre.

Each generation of exploitation filmmakers, producers and distributors has racked up its own variations on the Nazi theme.

Dave *BLOOD FEAST* Friedman was considering doing a Nazi slave camp epic as early as 1963. Somehow the audience, the censor and the market wasn't quite ripe for it then, and it was Friedman's pint-sized rival, Bob Cresse who was first past the post with his chillingly sordid *LOVE CAMP 7* (1968). This was a real piece of low rent cinema, a cheesy shocker that was the ultimate bad-taste Nazi film for nearly a decade. Even today, its infamy lives on.

*LOVE CAMP 7* holds the dubious honour of being the first totally tasteless Nazi-orientated skin and torture flick. There were few imitators and follow-ups. The film that





## THE BEAST IN THE HEAT

really kicked off the '70s SS phenomenon was the seriously arty, *THE NIGHT PORTER* (1974). This Italian film lured household names like Dirk Bogarde and Charlotte Rampling into its dubious clutches, and somehow its well-meaning veneer of art, gloss and studied seriousness made the subject matter seem OK.

*THE NIGHT PORTER* consequently did well at the box office, and revitalized interest in Hitler's uniformed madmen. Pretty soon there were many other films sporting dodgy SS villains and assorted depravity. By stark contrast, the next two Nazi-inspired films to slip down the chute focused on the

ghoulish depravity and ruthlessly scientific dementia at the core of the Third Reich philosophy.

The first - *ILSA: SHE WOLF OF THE SS* (1974), is a legend among trash film fans everywhere. It's a bit like *BLOOD FEAST* gone wrong, and features buckets of blood, dining room torture (a naked Jewess stands on a slowly melting block of ice with a nose round her neck), and other unspeakable elements. Ilsa was played by the abundantly developed Dyanne Thorne. She was the sadistic megavixen par excellence. In real life she's a soft spoken gal, a true believer in 'Universal Consciousness,' a healthy eater and a far cry from the cold-hearted babe she portrays on-screen. But over the years the Ilsa image has stuck with her - and I

guess it's a tribute to her acting ability that many reporters and fans think she's the cold-blooded hellcat she portrays on screen.

*ILSA* is one of those films soaked in outrage, whose origins are shrouded in mystery. Produced by Cinepix of Canada and funded by US money, it was a film that no one would own up to - until recently. Who was the brain behind this truly outrageous epic? The film credits list Herman Traeger as the founding father of this sadistic opus, but a few years back Dave Friedman finally came clean and admitted that *ILSA* was one of his hellish spawn. It's a film that will live on, in infamy, forever.

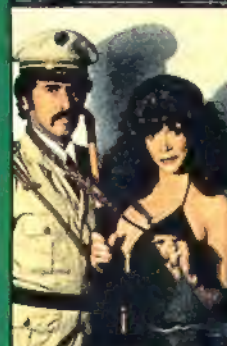
*ILSA: SHE WOLF OF THE SS* was quickly followed by an even more extreme item, *ILSA: HAREM KEEPER FOR THE OIL SHEIKS* (1976). This fetid flick, which featured some Russ Meyer regulars like Uschi Digard and Hadji, also had famed satirist Spaulding (SWIMMING TO CAMBODIA) Grey in a bit part. A real over-the-topper, *HAREM KEEPER* is one of those films everybody involved in making it wants to keep out of their respectable C.V.'s.

After the tub-thumping excesses of *HAREM KEEPER*, the third and final Canadian Ilsa film, *ILSA: TIGRESS OF SIBERIA* (1979) was more of a James Bond romp. In this one the action flicked from the ice-cold recesses of Siberia to a brothel in Toronto, and cold-blooded Ilsa went from dunking prisoners in the ice cold wastes to dishing out psycho-torture in her cat house dungeon.

No other Canadians or Americans were reckless enough to tackle the taboo topic of concentration camp carnage, and it was the Italians alone who clasped the thorny nettle

of Nazism to their cinematic bosom. *THE NIGHT PORTER* and *ILSA: SHE WOLF OF THE SS* may have opened the way, but the avalanche of trash that followed rolled along its own peculiar trajectory. First and most importantly down the pike was the infamous and legendary *SALON KITTY* (1976). This was a film that created a stir in Britain when it was first released. It was also the masterwork that inspired the host of Italian cash-ins that came in its sex'n'swastika's wake.

Whereas *THE NIGHT PORTER* had been a mucho serious effort, aimed at the pensive, easily shocked middle class audience, *SALON KITTY* was a complete change of pace. Its director, Tinto Brass, was motivated to produce a slice of 'popular pornography' with a political message. Like most Italian SS films, it revelled in the uniforms and



The many faces of Dyanne Thorne







able at the same time. Today the movie is looked on with dismay and shame, yet shortly after its original release it toured the country on a double-bill with **THE GREAT ROCK 'N' ROLL SWINDLE**: a double helping of punk and outrage; a pean to the power of bad taste.

If Kitty had a veneer of sophistication, the other efforts that followed, such as **GESTAPO'S LAST ORGY** (1976), opted for a cruder approach, going for the jugular and revelling in the monstrous sadism and brutality of the SS martinets. Despite its faults, **ORGY** captured some of the deranged workings of the Nazi mind, and the vile happenings reflected the twisted neurosis at the heart of the whole phenomenon. The scenes of physical torture were sickening enough, yet were easier to handle than the sight of some Nazi vixen stroking a pair of gloves made from the soft skin of an infant.

(1976) were unremittingly squalid. The same goes for **WOMEN'S CAMP 119** (1976), by the infamous Bruno Mattei, which offered little humour and plenty of queasy degradation and brutality.

The squalid approach reached new heights with the terminally outrageous **BEAST IN HEAT** (1976). Crude and tasteless, **BEAST** is a hard film to take seriously. The slender plot revolves around a hopped-up SS Vixen running a lab in what looks like a disused garage. Dabbling in mutation and genetics, she produces a hairy animal, a thing that gives brutes a real bad name. **BEAST** plummeted to new lows in bad taste, and for some folks the scenes of the hairy monster ripping off a young gal's pubic hair are outlandish, unreal and funny. While for others...

As the Nazi flicks caught on, they more or less merged with the Women In Prison film, and here's where filmmakers such as Jess Franco come in. Franco didn't think highly of the cycle of Nazi films, yet he has always

sadism while condemning the Nazi mainmen as deluded degenerates. It's a peculiarly Italian viewpoint - for some reason the Italians lap up the style and are drawn irresistibly by Nordic purity - if you don't believe me, check out the buxom Anita Ekberg in Fellini's **LA DOLCE VITA**.

In **SALON KITTY**, most of the action focused on the decadent goings on in an SS-infested brothel. The sets were lush and the overall style was kitsch, artificial and inspired. The film launched an avalanche of spaghetti shockers cashing in on the same subject. It's a familiar pattern in the Italian film industry: each successful film grosser than the last.

Like the other Nazi films that followed, **SALON KITTY** was high camp, and even though the subject matter was totally tasteless it still managed to be chilling and laugh-



*The SHE WOLF and friends!*

#### Deep-freeze Nazis from **THE FROZEN DEAD**



If **ORGY** attempted to cash in on the beastly deeds of the erstwhile dictators, films such as **SS EXPERIMENT CAMP** (1978) centered round an impotent power crazed doctor - a typical fascist dupe who takes his experiments to their logical and absurd conclusion by grafting the 'nuts' of a virile soldier onto his own body! The film reaches a ludicrous climax with the deranged donor waking up and finding the source of his manhood has been hacked off. Gun in hand he tackles the camp commandant with the unforgettable line: 'What have you done with my balls?' Scenes of macabre comedy such as this are always overlooked by the censor and the whingeing moralists who usually only see and hear what they want to.

**SS EXPERIMENT CAMP** is one of the most notorious 'video nasties,' and it's also one of the funniest. Other Nazi offerings such as **SS CAMP 5 - WOMEN'S HELL**





been interested in having plenty of women in his movies. His one addition to the Nazi cycle is **WANDA THE WICKED WARDEN** (1978), also known as **ILSA: THE WICKED WARDEN**. Originally the film was going to be called **NO MAN'S LAND**, but with Dyanne Thorne in the lead it was hard to resist cashing in on her cinematic infamy. Based on an actual case history, **WICKED WARDEN** is not Franco at his best. Thorne looks pretty spectacular in a full-bodied red



*Dyanne Thorne*

wig, but overall the film fails to deliver.

Looking back over these infamous films, there are few that stand out. **RED NIGHTS OF THE GESTAPO**, (1976), **DEPORTED WOMEN OF THE SS SPECIAL SECTION** (1978) and **SS GIRLS** (1976) are three of them. Less brutal and frantic than the more extreme efforts, they are the respectable side of the phenomenon. **RED NIGHTS** is slow-moving and decadent, and features naked women sawing on the violin. **SS GIRLS** is a sort of 'Monty Python meets Russ Meyer' flick, and ends with the usual demented Nazi wailing that his knob is mightier than Hitler as he rolls about in drunken revelry.

**DEPORTED WOMEN**, on the other hand, is more ignoble and corrupt. In this one the irrepressible John Steiner (from **SALON KITTY**) takes the helm as the mixed-up commandant in love with a Jewish prisoner - a typical Nazi dilemma. In this one Steiner is a loathsome and lonesome guy, a mixed up member of the master race who seeks solace with his sweaty sidekick, Otto. Overall it's strikingly vile and unmissable.

There were many more in this disreputable cycle, and almost all of them featured at least one scene of off-the-wall degeneration. In **NAZI LOVE CAMP 27** (1976), the camp commander weeps tears of joy as a Jewish inmate lashes him contemptuously with a whip. **LOVE TRAIN FOR HITLER** sported

similar degeneracy, with scenes of boot-licking, whip-kissing, etc. On the whole these films present the SS uber-men as mixed up low-lifers, scrapings from the barrel-bottom of humanity. And I guess that's what they were. In some ways these films have an element of crude truth in among their taste-

less content.

While it lasted, the penchant for SS stories seemed almost unstoppable. Even humble war films such as **THE DESERT TIGERS** (1978) have scenes of torture and sadistic goings on thrown in to spice up the action. Yet by the tail end of the Seventies the whole thing had run its course. Audiences and filmmakers alike had had enough of the Third Reich and wanted to move on to greener and fresher pastures. The end came as quickly as that of the real Third Reich. Perhaps the audience for these outrageous antics switched their attention to the ever expanding Women in Prison films?

The question that remains unanswered is, who were the audience for these Nazi epics? Were they young hipsters in search of unspeakable thrills, or older guys looking for a turn on? Nobody knows. Of course it's unlikely that you'll find many 'normal' folk admitting to having an extensive collection of Nazi exploitation fare, but we all know that those guys (and gals) are out there. Just biding their time.

Maybe until after Maastricht?





# POST MORTEM

**If you have something you want to get off your chest, don't be afraid to scream at us about it. Send your bouquets or brickbats to Post Mortem, The Dark Side, Stray Cat Publishing, P.O. Box 146, Plymouth PL1 1AX**

*Dear Old Mates At Dark Side,*  
Thank you for the best horror movie magazine in the UK today. I've been reading since issue one (it was that RE-ANIMATOR 2 review that snagged me!) Now you're probably thinking, why the hell is this freak writing to us? Well, the answer is simple - I just fancied a decent intellectual natter to somebody (anybody?) about my favourite genre - horror.

I have recently been lucky enough to catch uncut (I think!) versions of CANNIBAL HOLOCAUST, MANIAC, BEYOND THE DARKNESS, and ZOMBIE HOLOCAUST. Well, I thought I was lucky. All through my early teenage life, the thought of actually having the stomach to sit through these great splatter epics was totally out of the question. But now, after seeing these very AVERAGE films, I can see how stupid I was. Ruggero Deodato's totally over-the-top CANNIBAL HOLOCAUST is mildly amusing. I like the, "Who are the real cannibals?" storyline, and the way the film makes the viewer very uncomfortable during the realistic abortion, rape and animal cruelty scenes. But in the end it seems that the screenplay was just based around various gory deaths - like most horror movies nowadays! I won't bother to mention Joe D'Amato's BEYOND THE DARKNESS (dear, oh dear!) and ZOMBIE HOLOCAUST, but I will mention the cream of the bunch - William Lustig's MANIAC. Lustig manages to achieve a genuine feeling of dread, with Joe Spinell's maniac cruelly hunting and playing with his victims. Also good are the disturbing monologues performed by the principal character after he has offed his latest victim - and Tom Savini's superb make-up effects go down a treat as well. So if any readers get a chance to see this low-budget classic, check it out! In the September issue you said that the Intervention release removed every one of Savini's

graphic "scalping" effects. I can't see why these would offend in this day and age - the BBFC let a lot more of Savini's extreme work on DAY OF THE DEAD through, and that's twice as gory as MANIAC! Now for some questions. When is Argento's TRAUMA coming out?

Could you please do an interview with Brad Dourif?

Is Brian Yuzna still doing RE-ANIMATOR 3?

What exactly is Clive Barker's new film, EDEN USA?

Is Stuart Gordon's FORTRESS nearing release, or are we talking video limbo here? Also, is it a Charles Band production? Who has the rights to THE RESURRECTED? Could you please ask them to release it over here pretty sharpish?

When is GRAVE MISDEMEANOURS (aka NIGHTLIFE) being released to sell-through?

Is Tom (FRIGHT NIGHT) Holland still directing THINNER?

Is FROM BEYOND uncut on video? Have the BBFC let BRAINDEAD through uncut?

Why haven't you reviewed BASKET CASE 3: THE PROGENY yet?

Was I the only person who liked ALIEN 3?

In your Video Vault section you hardly ever review horror movies any more, it seems to be full of reviews of erotic thrillers. I know that there aren't always new horror movies released each month, but the work of Wings Hauser and Ginger Lynn certainly doesn't send shivers down my spine - well, maybe Ginger Lynn does...

Finally, bring back COMIC CRYPT! Matthew Skidmore, Watford, West Herts.

Argento's TRAUMA is yet to be picked up for UK distribution. RE-ANIMATOR 3 is still in the planning stage. EDEN USA is a science fiction thriller - I don't know the plot. Stuart

Gordon's FORTRESS is finished and ready for release. It's apparently pretty good and may get a small theatrical release here. Charlie Band wasn't the producer - \$12 million was too rich for his blood. THE RESURRECTED will eventually turn up as a Columbia Tristar release. Though not officially released to sell-through yet, you should be able to pick up a copy of Medusa's GRAVE MISDEMEANOURS fairly cheaply. Tom Holland will be directing THINNER, but his next release is a chiller called THE TEMP. FROM BEYOND has a few seconds of cuts on video. There's loose talk circulating that the BBFC will pass BRAINDEAD uncut because it's obviously a comedy - I don't believe it myself and it's still too early to say. We HAVE reviewed BASKET CASE 3 - a couple of issues back. Yes, you ARE the only person who liked ALIEN 3 - and we like erotic thrillers...

"Okay, so I'm no spring chicken!"

*Dear Dark Side,*  
Firstly can I say I thought your BEST OF DARK SIDE was a great buy, as I had missed most of your early issues. What I would like to ask is, firstly, I noticed in the November issue that you raved about the VIDEO WATCHDOG book and gave the address to which to send money to purchase it. But I was wondering whether the book is available in any British stores (like FORBIDDEN PLANET). Secondly, my local newsagent's has a small video section, but about 4 years ago a video shop set up next door, so they started selling off their old rental tapes. I purchased Fulci's HOUSE BY THE CEMETERY, SQUIRM, Argento's TENEBRAE, Ferrara's DRILLER KILLER, BASKET CASE, DAY OF THE DEAD, RE-ANIMATOR and RETURN OF THE LIVING DEAD as a package for under £30. What I would like to know is, are DRILLER KILLER, TENEBRAE and HOUSE





cut? Lastly, I have been trying to obtain a copy of **TWO EVIL EYES** without success. Was it ever released in this country, and if so who distributed it? PS: What does "Ungawa" mean?

J De Notredame,  
Paisley, Scotland

I'm sure that **THE VIDEO WATCH-DOG BOOK** will eventually find its way to these shores, but it wasn't in **FORBIDDEN PLANET** when I last looked. As to the movies you are enquiring about, **TENEBRAE** and **DRILLER KILLER** are bound to be uncut, while **HOUSE** will only be uncensored if it is the original Vampix/Video Media release. **TWO EVIL EYES** was released by Medusa and is still in their back catalogue. "Ungawa" is the battle cry of Tarzan, or is it his monkey?



Dear Dark Side,

In July of 1992 you reviewed a film called **HOLLYWOOD SCREAM QUEEN HOT TUB PARTY** (from Colourbox). There is supposed to be a recession on, but when I went into my local video shop and asked them to get me a brand new copy of this video (for which I was quite willing to pay full price), I was then told, "we can't get it"? Please can you tell me where I can get this film? Finally, do you have any information on the Christopher Lee film which I caught by accident on the satellite channel SAT 1? It was a Berlin/Madrid/Rome film called **DER HEXENTOTER VON BLACKMOOR** - more or less translated as **THE WITCH-KILLER OF BLACKMOOR**. There were quite a few gory scenes in it, has it ever been shown in England?

Mr. B. Wright,  
Chandler's Ford, Eastleigh.  
We gave away a lot of copies of the

"All I said was, 'Boo!'"



scream queen movie as subscription gifts - you should have been a bit quicker off the mark! The reason you can't get it is because Colourbox have now gone the way of all flesh - hot tubs and all! That Chris Lee movie is the 1969 **NIGHT OF THE BLOOD MONSTER** (aka **THE BLOODY JUDGE**). Lee plays the depraved Judge Jeffreys, who mercilessly persecuted witches on behalf of James II. It was directed by our old mate Jess Franco, about whom you can read in this very issue - are we good to you or what? The film was briefly shown in England in the early 70s.



Dear Post Mortem,

Every time I open a video mag somebody is complaining about **ZOMBIE FLESH EATERS**. But no one seems to realise that if companies like **VIPCO** didn't take a couple of seconds of film out to please the censors then a lot of people just wouldn't be able to see films like these. Also, the Postman Pat format (letterboxed) edition of **FLESH EATERS** is worth having and makes up for the cuts. I see that Electric Video are releasing **HENRY: PORTRAIT OF A SERIAL KILLER** with almost two minutes of cuts, but true horror fans won't complain - they'll just be glad to see it on video. Finally, I'm looking for a book called **THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF HORROR**, which has a red cover with Frankenstein on it. I need to know author, publisher and price. PS: **THE BEST OF DARK SIDE** was excellent!

Tony Thompson,  
Whitehaven, Cumbria  
**THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF HORROR** was published by Hamlyn in 1987 for £4.99. It was edited by Richard Davis and has a foreword by Peter Cushing.



"Boris? You can go home now, we've finished filming..."

Dear Dark Side,

I keep falling for the same marketing ploy devised by low-budget video companies - buying a video because of pictures on the back cover that turn out not to be in the movie! How can they get away with this? For example, **TERROR ON THE MENU** uses the same back cover as **LAST HOUSE ON DEAD END STREET**, and **NIGHTMARE** (a terrible American TV show) has **VIPCO's** cover of **BLOOD BRIDE**! Also, Paul Naschy's **SHADOW OF THE WEREWOLF** has Jamie Lee Curtis

on its back cover. I thought I would just write and warn other readers not to fall for the same trick!

John Sherlock,  
Brighton

With a name like yours I'm surprised you didn't spot these scams in advance! **TERROR ON THE MENU** is actually **THE FOLKS AT THE RED WOLF INN**, by the way.



Dear Dark Side,

I'm writing to tell you of an incident that happened to me a few years ago, and to clarify a certain matter. To cut a long story short, my house was raided and a number of videos seized. Due to lack of evidence no charges were brought against me and the videos were later returned, except for a number of banned films that they confiscated. Now, I remember reading in these very pages that you said it is not illegal to be in possession of banned films, providing you are not swapping copies or selling - right? I was doing neither at the time, and as I was not charged with any illegal activity, did the police really have the right to confiscate these films and tell me to sign a destruction order on them? Looking back, I do not think they did! When are the powers-that-be going to realise that banning and/or censoring films just doesn't work. It only serves to create a black market for video piracy in this country - we all know how easy it is to get hold of



imported European versions. Do they really think we're not intelligent enough to know the difference between reality and fantasy? Obviously, from some of the stupid comments made on TV after the video seizures of last year, they are not intelligent enough to make the distinction themselves. I've seen worse sights on NEWS AT TEN than you get in these movies, and let's face it, some of them are so badly made that they are laughable. So wake up BBFC. This is the 1990s, and it's time that adult, mature horror fans were allowed to view what they want in this country!

Gav,  
Gloucester.

I think you were conned into signing that destruction order, but what's a guy to do when you have Mr. Plod's burly footsteps resounding on your doorstep? If they tried it with me I'd hand over my secret stash of NODDY tapes right away.



Dear Dark Side,  
I am writing this letter of complaint on behalf of all gore fans. Your reply to Ian Tanner's letter was nothing short of insulting, not only to Mr. Tanner, but to all horror fans in general. I love Fulci, not simply because he is gory, but because he scares the shit out of me. To have a go at somebody because they enjoy the eyeball-popping scene and want it in the final cut is disgusting. We all know you prefer the cut version. That is your right, but do you think it is fair to let your views influence your replies to readers' letters? I hate cannibal movies, but you will never hear me rubbishing them. The fact that Mr. Tanner is disappointed with the legal version must rest with you and every other editor of horror magazines. New horror fans only hear of such sequences through mags such as this, and to rubbish your readers because they want to see scenes that you write about is rather stupid on your part. It was morbid curiosity that turned me on to Fulci and I suspect it is the same for all horror fans. You say it is easy to get hold of nasties, well, I wish you would tell me where! All I've ever been offered are second-rate copies through small ads. DARK SIDE used to be a great mag, now it is merely a good one. Why don't you give your readers what they want? TUNES OF GORY is great if you like Metal music. There are a million weirdos recording horror songs, your letters page reflects this. What's wrong, can't you be bothered? Secondly, people want fiction - surely a small section would not reduce your readership much? Why not alternate between fiction and music and compress your two book review sections into one?



Have you seen this man?

Lastly, horror fans want reassurance. Tell them it is all right to like horror movies, no matter how gory - and stop slagging them off!

PS: Who reviews the videos, Barry Norman? MEMOIRS is mainstream comedy trash. When I want comedy reviews I'll start reading FANGORIA!

Anon

I most certainly DON'T prefer cut films, and neither would I rubbish gore fans, because I'm one myself. I

found Ian Tanner's letter insulting and therefore felt I was quite entitled to reply in a similar tone. Of course it's right to let my views influence my replies - If I couldn't express my opinions I wouldn't be publishing a mag like this! In case you haven't noticed we are still carrying TUNES OF GORY (albeit on an intermittent basis), but the track record of publications like FEAR proves to me that people don't want fiction. We're currently selling about three times as

many issues per month as FEAR did in their heyday, so we must be doing something right. Perhaps it's down to dear old Barry's reviews...



Dear Mr. Bryce,  
Having recently re-read through my copies of DARK SIDE, something caught my eye that pissed me off even more the second time round. In the November 1992 issue you printed a letter from Simon Jones from Molesey, Surrey, in which he condones the film, I SPIT ON YOUR GRAVE, and in particular the harrowing rape scene. The fact that Jennifer (Camille Keaton) gets her revenge on her attackers shows that their actions are condemned. Although the rape is horror in itself, the real gore of the film comes with her revenge - the rape merely precipitates this. Simon Jones claims to have, "Seen this film more times than you've had hot dinners," and yet he seems to have completely missed the central message of the movie each time. It is people like him who give real horror buffs a bad name in the press as sick, perverted sadists. Anyone who, "Loves watching a rape scene that lasts for an hour and a half," should be asked the question: Would you enjoy watching it so much if it was your mother being raped?

Finally, could you include (in your lavishly good TUNES OF GORY) more gore bands such as Cannibal Corpse and Deicide?

PS: Tell Sally from Bradford (Jan 1993 issue) that if she wants pin-ups she should be reading MY GUY! Vic, South London  
No comment.



"We're out of red, I'm afraid..."





Dear Dark Side,  
First I'd like to say what a brilliant magazine you're publishing. I have all the issues apart from the first three, which I am trying to get hold of (without any luck!). Anyway, I would like to ask a few questions. I'm a great fan of Stephen King, James Herbert, Guy N. Smith, Dean R. Koontz etc, and you have covered all of them in your magazine at one time or another. But there is an author who I find just as great, but whom you have never mentioned. He is Christopher Pike, and I have all his books. Have you ever written about him? A couple of years ago when I was subscribing to FEAR, (I was one of the unlucky ones who was done out of twelve issues), I read a review of a film called THE FACE OF FEAR. Having read the book by Dean R. Koontz I was well pleased, and rushed out to look for a copy of the video. Unfortunately I have never been able to find it. Can you tell me if someone at FEAR was imagining seeing this film? Just recently I have seen a cheap copy of EXORCIST 2: THE HERETIC for sale. Having seen the mega-brill original at the cinema I have been tempted to buy it, but I've heard the sequel is a bit of a disaster. Is this true?

Warren Looke,  
Wimborne, Dorset.

I saw a review copy of FACE OF FEAR a while back. It was on the Warner label and was obviously a television movie. I quite enjoyed it, actually, and the central premise (people trapped in a highrise by a maniac) reminded me a bit of another enjoyable telly movie called TRAPPED. I think it has been deleted now, but I bet it turns up on TV soon. THE HERETIC is for Linda Blair fanatics only.

"I don't fancy yours much..."



Dear Dark Side,  
I feel I must come to your defence concerning the rather childish letter written by Ian Tanner (December issue). I have loved the horror genre since I was a child, and feel that yours is the best mag on the market for horror fans because it is written by people who have an obvious love for the genre. To say you guys don't care about censorship is well out of order. I'm not trying to brown-nose(!), It is just that his letter really annoyed me. It's gore freaks like him that give us a bad name. Hey, don't get me wrong. I love the strong stuff, but it doesn't take priority. Take CARNIVAL OF SOULS. That has no gore at all, but is still very disturbing, and that is what it's all about - being scared rather than just repulsed. Anyway, it is obvious that Mr. Tanner knows less than nothing, because EV's SUSPIRIA was also heavily cut!

James G.

Devon

Ian has certainly had his fifteen minutes of fame this issue!



Dear Dark Side,  
Congratulations to all concerned for BLOOD ON THE CARPET in issue 28. A meeting between Ramsey Campbell and Shaun Hutson was a mouth-watering prospect, and I'm glad to say it didn't disappoint. It was very evident from the discussion that each writer has a very different motivation. Compare Campbell's "I was trying to pay back some of the pleasure I'd got out of the field," with Hutson's "Greed is my main motivator." I disagree with Hutson equating sales success with literary merit, as this does not take into



"Your cheeseburger will be ready in a moment..."

account the excellent work that is published in the small press - a vital part of the horror scene. Unfortunately, this attitude is all too prevalent among mainstream horror publishers, and it is probably why writers such as Thomas Ligotti and D.F. Lewis do not receive the wider audience they deserve. Campbell is right in his assertion that the horror field is big enough to accommodate both writers' styles - but it is a pity that the media do tend to associate horror fiction solely with Hutson's excesses - to the exclusion of Campbell's unnerving tales of urban decay.

It was surprising, though, how often Campbell and Hutson were in agreement. Both use autobiographical elements in their fiction (Campbell's introduction to THE FACE THAT MUST DIE being an extremely disturbing piece of prose) although the actual mechanics of writing are different for each author (Campbell allowing his writing to surprise him, while Hutson carefully plots his novels beforehand). Their comments on the perceptions of critics were also very similar. And I would never have had Shaun Hutson pegged as an admirer of Lovecraft. Overall, this article was an inspired idea, and one of the best that THE

DARK SIDE has yet published. It would be good to see the concept extended to include other luminaries of modern horror.

Alan Gairey,  
Bracknell, Berkshire.

Next month, Clive Barker slugs it out with Barbara Cartland.



Dear Dark Side,  
Can you answer three questions for me?

1. Can you buy or rent cut copies of EATEN ALIVE, CANNIBAL FEROX or CANNIBAL HOLOCAUST?

2. Are there any other good cannibal movies available?

3. Are you going to do (or have you already done) a video nasty special? If so, how can I get a back issue?

Ian Campbell,  
Cleveland.

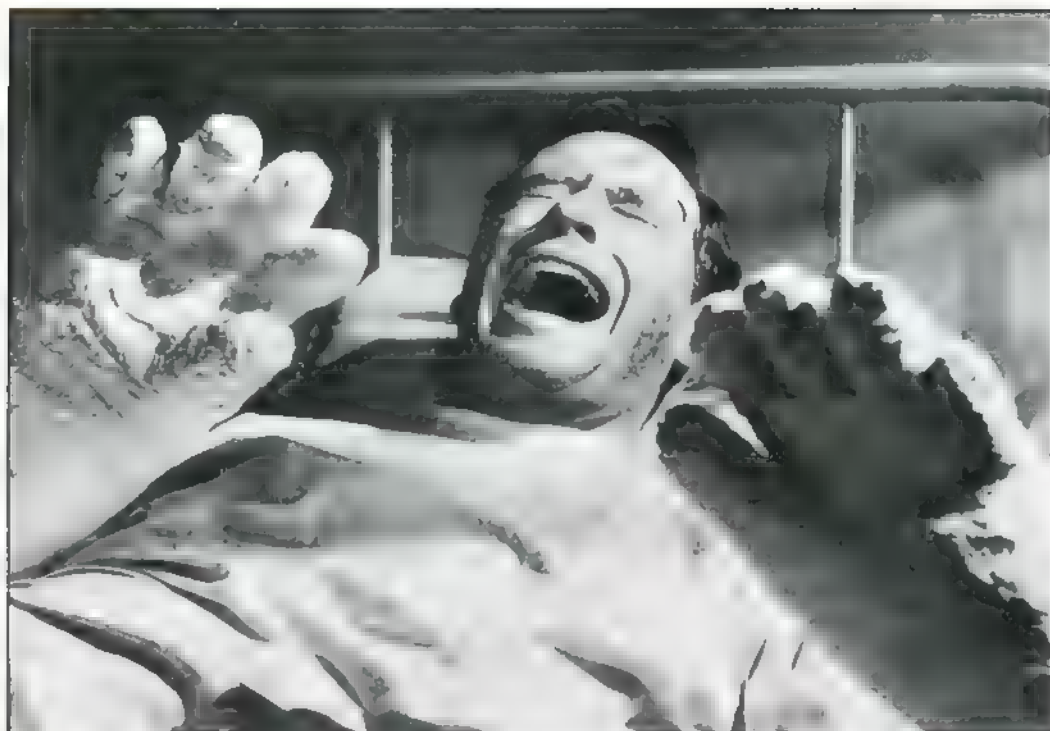
1. Yes for EATEN ALIVE (VIPCO), and no for the other two.

2. Try asking at Woolies.

3. Yes, issue 20 was our Video Nasties Special. Unfortunately (or fortunately for us, because we get the lolly) it's all sold out







"I want to go to the toilet!"

Dear Dark Side,  
I have long been a big fan of Michael Biehn (ALIENS, THE ABYSS). He isn't that well known, but I think he is great. I have seen him in ALIENS, NAVY S.E.A.L.S. and THE TERMINATOR. I know he is also in TIMEBOMB and THE ABYSS. Could you please tell me what other films he has been in.

Jamie Edwards,  
Market Weighton, York.  
Michael has also starred in THE FAN, THE SEVENTH SIGN, COACH. William Friedkin's excellent RAMPAGE (Fox Video) and in a movie called IN A SHALLOW GRAVE. He did shoot a sequence for TERMINATOR 2, but it was cut prior to release



Dear Allan,  
Having bought THE DARK SIDE for over a year now, I must thank you one and all for this brilliant magazine - far superior to the likes of GOREZONE and TOXIC HORROR, which are far too colourful. THE DARK SIDE is enigmatic and sinister, more like a really good classic horror. But enough of this praise, and on to a little suggestion I have for a special feature. After watching THE PIT AND THE PENDULUM with Lance Henriksen. I wondered how many old horror movies had been remade in modern times, and perhaps you could compare them with the originals? I am sure there have been many such productions, like THE FLY, THE THING and INVASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS (which I believe is getting re-made again, is this true?) etc.

Well, that's me almost done, except to say PLEASE give us some posters, as I would really hate to deface my fab collection of THE DARK SIDE!

Yours ghoulishly,  
ScottyLad,  
Port Glasgow, Scotland  
Abel Ferrara's new version of INVASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS should be with us later this year - perhaps we'll do a remake feature then. And we'll think about those posters



"Who has made my coffin into a park bench?"



Dear Dark Side,  
Firstly, I'd like to know who allowed that self-opinionated Ian Tanner column space in your letters page? If he had had some constructive criticism to make then that would have been different, but his comments were unjustified. If the readers of DARK SIDE wish to use their space (the letters page) to vent their frustrations on the subject of censorship, then it is their right to do so. As for his comments on ZOMBIE FLESH EATERS, well, the less said the better...

Anyway, could I ask a couple of questions, please?

I recently purchased a film and I'd like some help identifying it. The video box has the title of WEREWOLF WOMAN emblazoned across the cover, with a picture of said woman half in lupine form. However, when I played the tape the title was displayed onscreen as NAKED WEREWOLF WOMAN. I then sat through 90 minutes of soft porn and around 2 minutes of horror thrown in at the beginning. I hope I'm not offending fans of this film when I say it was utter crap! But as I like bad films I would like to know anything you can tell me about it. Next, I have a sell-through tape of THE THING (1982) from CIC Video. I have been told that this film was released uncensored. My version is 104 minutes long - is it cut? Finally, I got my DARK SIDE horror card with the March issue (no 18). It was number 160,000 odd, but I have since lost it. Any chance of a replacement?

Andy Nuttall,  
Wirral.

Dear Dark Side,  
You've had an A-Z of Alien films, so how about an A-Z of monster films? Some of us actually like watching people prance around in dodgy-looking dinosaur costumes! Or how about an article on the films of Donald Pleasence? He has played a big part in the sci-fi and horror genres.

G. Thompson, Lincoln.

We did an interview with Donald last month. Don't worry, there'll be plenty of dodgy-looking monsters in future issues





"I practise safe sex!"

WEREWOLF WOMAN was made in 1976 by director Salvatore Di Silvestro. It stars Annik Borel and Frederick Stafford. Your version of THE THING is probably uncut at that length. Sorry, we don't have any spare horror cards left.



Dear Mr. Bryce, First, a reprint, and then in the very next issue a seven-page interview with two chalk-and-cheese masters of horror? Keep this up and 1993 will be a very good year for you! The STAR TREK episode guide has been a big help with the repeats on BBC2, although as a layman to the first season, details on the storylines would have been better than production/Trekkies-only trivia. So I hope you've started the year as you mean to carry on, but why do

fanzines take so long to get reviewed? Are you totally swamped with the things, or did you just start the feature in your third issue, hence the long lead time? I know that HELLRAISER III has been shown at a few festivals, but did it get a West End release at all? Or has Clive been ignored for going to America? HELL II only got a fortnight in the West End, and NIGHTBREED three weeks, so maybe the festivals are the last places to see horror films?

Kenneth Henry, Enfield, Middlesex  
I don't know why fanzines take so long to get reviewed - that's a question for Steve Green! HELLRAISER III should be in release by the time you read these words.



Dear Allan Bryce, Having been on a French sabbatical for the last few months researching another novel, I had the chance to catch a film that so impressed me I felt compelled to put pen to paper and share it with your readers. C'EST ARMINE PRIS DE CHEZ VOUS (THIS HAPPENED IN YOUR HOME/NEIGHBOURHOOD) is a must-see film that in all honesty will probably never get shown in the UK. Shot entirely in black and white, it has the authentic feel of a documentary; it is a satirical comment on the banality of existence under the threat of death and the last fleeting moments of personal destruction as seen through the artificial eyes of a television film crew as they pursue a mass-murderer through his day's work. These are the everyday incidents of your worst nightmares, a film which hits well below the belt of bad taste to explore the diabolical atrocities people have inflicted upon one another. Crammed with French/Belgian in-jokes, it redefines the term, dark humour. This is the spiteful snigger of a black hole, millions of miles out in space. Devoid of petty morals and national sensibilities, it's a phenomenally cynical work that goes beyond the excesses of A CLOCKWORK ORANGE and the orgiastic cannibalism of NEKROMANTIK. This film blatantly trespasses into forbidden territory, an engaging twinkle in its murderous eye, so that it's very difficult not to laugh along. A film to induce guilt in the most aloof. I advise the readers of THE DARK SIDE to pester their local art cinema to show this - NOW!

Michael Paul Peter (author RED HEDZ)

Michael is talking about MAN BITES DOG, which we reviewed a few months back and which will be on selected release shortly

## COMPETITION WINNERS ISSUE 28

### UNIVERSAL SOLDIER

H. Clark, Linlithgow  
Graham Skeggs, Cirencester  
A. Tonston, Dorking  
David Lewis, Cornwall  
D. Deacon, Holmwood  
Andy Crook, London W9  
Steve Fife, Edinburgh  
Julie Samson, Hitchin  
Frank Tarling, Cranleigh  
Mr. P. Lawson, Horsham

### PROJECT SHADOWCHASER

Simon Key, Banstead  
Richard Holt, Ryde, Isle Of Wight  
T. Crewe, Shanklin  
R. Graham, Glasgow  
Martin Drummond,

### Selsey

Ken Soames, Chelsea  
J. Cramm, Chessington  
Brian Gould, Cricklewood  
H. Cryer, Chingford  
D. Simpson, Chorleywood

### CHILDREN OF THE CORN II: THE FINAL SACRIFICE

G. Hammond, Hove  
F. Saunders, Devon  
Patricia Turnbull, Capel  
S. Carling, Bisley  
Peter Jenkins, Reigate  
James Cork, Tyne and Wear  
Miss S. Hornby, Greenwich  
Andrew Brainsby, Newcastle  
P. Thomas, Leeds  
M. Romain, Norwich





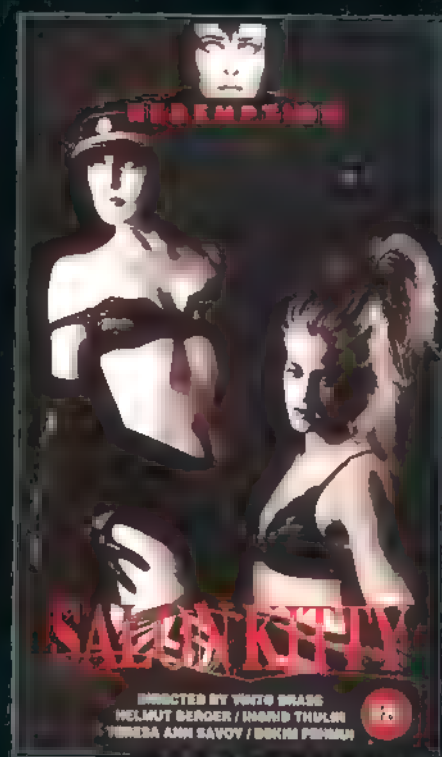
# REDEMPTION

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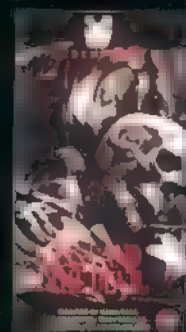


RELEASED MARCH 22



FORTHCOMING RELEASES INCLUDE

JESS FRANCO'S *SUCCUBUS*, MASSIMO DALLAMANO'S *VENUS IN FURS*,  
FRANK STRAYER'S 1933 CLASSIC *THE VAMPIRE BAT*,  
JEAN ROLLIN'S *REQUIEM FOR A VAMPIRE* AND  
CARL DREYER'S EXTRAORDINARY *VAMPYR*



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# VIDEO VAULT

Key to the ratings:  
 \*\*\* = excellent  
 \*\* = good  
 \* = mediocre  
 = poor

The door to the video vault creaks open. The Dark Side tunes in to the latest in TV terror.



## DARIO ARGENTO - MASTER OF HORROR

M.I.A.  
 \*\*\*

Though not anywhere near as interesting as Michele Soavi's 1986 Argento profile, DARIO ARGENTO'S WORLD OF HORROR, this 1990 'tribute' compiled by long-time Argento groupie Luigi Cozzi has enough in the way of rare clips and behind-the-scenes footage to make it a necessary purchase for Argento fans. A bit of a lazy effort in many ways, the tape doesn't make any attempt to separate the many weird themes that run through the work of Italy's premier maestro of the macabre, nor indeed draw any kind of coherent critical opinion of the whole. Instead it's just a gore-spotters guide that also lumps in movies that were only produced by Dario (THE SECT, THE CHURCH, DEMONS 1 and 2), in a way that suggests Argento was also responsible for directing them - no doubt Michele Soavi had something to say about this.



VIDEO VAULT



A great deal of unintentional humour comes across in the dodgily translated interviews, which make some of Dario's unbelievably pretentious statements as hard to figure as Chinese arithmetic. (Find out what this guy is on and we'll have some ourselves). The clips are generally well-chosen, but the censor has snipped out a grisly compilation of axe murders from TENEBRAE and DEEP RED. We would also have preferred to see more of the earlier Argento stuff and less of the boring TWO EVIL EYES, which takes up rather too much of the running time. Also interviewed (albeit rather briefly) are Tom Savini, Sergio Stivaletti, and musician Pino Donaggio (who is ironically best known for his work on Brian De Palma pictures!). If you haven't seen Soavi's documentary then this is a must. Even if you have, it's still worth buying, just as long as you don't expect to learn anything new.

Certificate 18. Running Time 82 minutes.  
 R.M.



## POISON IVY

Guided Home Video  
\*\*\*

Okay, so DOPPELGÄNGER was a dud. But don't let that put you off seeing this significantly better Drew Barrymore vehicle, directed in an imaginative fashion by STRIPPED TO KILL'S Katt Shea Ruben. It belongs to that (post-PACIFIC HEIGHTS) strand of psychological thriller in which a devilish influence invades the household of a shaky 90s family, splitting it apart at the seams.

The nigger in the woodpile here is Drew, who has bleached blonde hair, collagen lips, and wears a skirt short enough to show off the tattoo on her thigh. She's the wild child that boyish Cooper (Sara Gilbert) has always wanted to be, and after a chance meeting the two quickly become unlikely pals. Ivy is from the wrong side of the tracks, while Cooper lives an expense account lifestyle in a big house with her TV tycoon dad (Tom Skerritt) and sickly mum (Cheryl Ladd). Before long, Ivy moves in, flirting with Skerritt and gaining the trust of Ladd. She even manages to endear herself to Cooper's dog (the scene in which Cooper discovers that even her mutt has deserted her is excellently done). It all ends in tears, of course, with Drew embarking on a steamy affair with Skerritt and plotting to murder Ladd. But to give away any more of the plot would

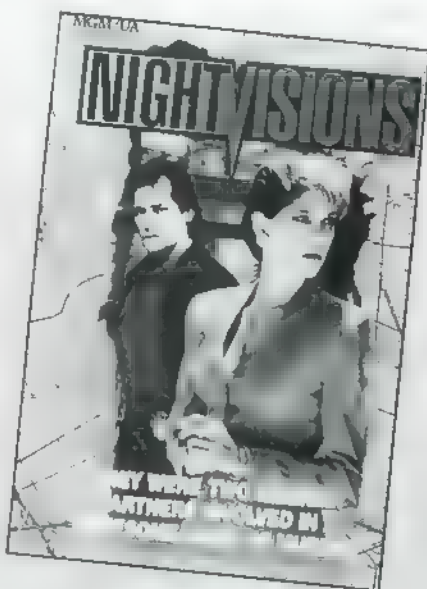
spoil what is actually a very enjoyable erotic thriller. Barrymore and Gilbert are outstanding in their roles, and the strong screenplay (by director Ruben and her husband Andy) scores high at providing solid, believable motivations for all of the characters. In fact at the end you almost feel sorry for the mixed-up murderess, who was only out to feel wanted. The film is also good on a technical level, with an atmospheric music score and vivid camerawork that borders on the arty-farty at times. Try not to miss this entertainingly odd thriller. Like Ivy, it sort of grows on you.

Certificate 18. Running Time: 90 minutes  
NT

he can throw a seven, along comes Jeremiah Jones (J.A. Preston), a wandering spirit who in true fairy godfather style wants to introduce our hero to his ultimate salvation - in the form of a 45 foot high steel robot in the shape of a dinosaur! Yes, "Robosaurus" has arrived to avenge Davey's death and help Nash fight an effective crusade against the evil and violence of the street. Obviously the pilot episode for a series that was supposed to blend ROBOCOP with JURASSIC PARK, this daft movie provokes quite a few unintentional giggles at times, but mainly it's just deadly dull. The sets look expensive and some of the effects depicting the robot monster are pretty good, but it's very poorly written

and the action scenes are staged in a by-the-numbers PG-rated fashion that recalls the worst of T.J. HOOKER. Our advice is to save your rental money and wait for it to come on the telly for free.

Certificate PG  
Running Time: 87 minutes.  
R.M.



## NIGHT VISIONS

Warner Home Video  
\*\*

Wes Craven never seems to do very well when making movies for the small screen (check out CHILLER, INVITATION TO HELL and SUMMER OF FEAR), and this busted pilot for a prospective series is no exception to the general rule. The director's own script is nothing more than a poorly developed rehash of FEAR, and despite its 18 certificate the movie is very tame stuff that could play an early evening time slot without causing consternation to the Mary Whitehouse clan.

The familiar plot has Loryn Locklin playing a criminal psychology graduate whose own traumatic childhood ex-

periences have left her plagued by nightmares. Worse, she now has visions of the future - and they are not about which horse is going to win the Derby! Being the public-spirited sort, our heroine realises that these psychic visions can assist the police in tracking down a serial killer who is stalking the streets of Los Angeles. By putting herself in the place of the victim, Locklin can predict where the murders will take place. But of course this clever trick fails just at the point when the killer has singled her out to be the next victim, and it all leads to a suspenseful finale that carries strong echoes of THE EYES OF LAURA MARS. What are you gonna rip off next, Wes? Initially very confusing, the film fairly quickly settles down into a standard police procedural, neither better nor worse than the thousands of others that crowd out our television channels. Were anyone else but Craven behind it, it could be easily dismissed, and still deserves to be. Can this really be from the same guy who gave us THE LAST HOUSE ON THE LEFT?

Certificate 18. Running Time: 90 minutes.  
R.M.

## VIDEO VAULT

## AND NOW THE SCREAMING STARTS

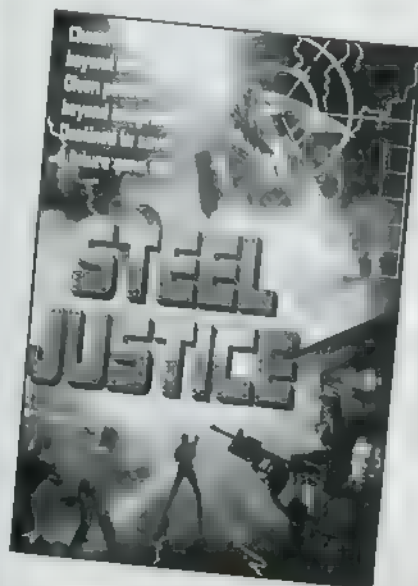
VIPCO  
\*\*\*

This VIPCO re-release of an old (1973) Amicus ghost story carries an 18 certificate and an advisory warning that "some

## STEEL JUSTICE

CIC  
\*

After the murder of his 8-year-old son, Davey, David Nash (Robert Taylor) loses the will to live. Being a policeman in a violent, humid, BLADE RUNNER-type future world is dangerous enough already, but he starts pushing his luck to the verge of suicide. However, before





may consider the content to be unsuitable viewing material and find certain scenes to be disturbing or offensive." Give us a break, guys - this was a 'AA' certificate when I first saw it at the cinema many years ago!

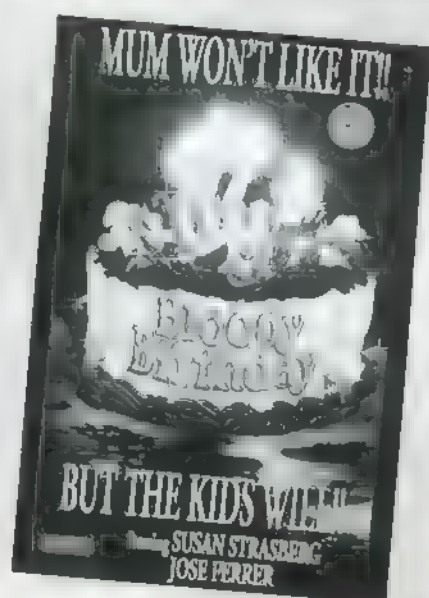
Anyway, publicity hype aside this is one of VIPCO's more welcome acquisitions, a well-made chiller that allows the ever-frugal Milton Subotsky the chance to bring back the motley severed hand from DR. TERROR'S HOUSE OF HORRORS and give it a good old scoot round a haunted mansion.

Smooth young Saint-to-be Ian Ogilvy brings his pregnant wife Stephanie Beacham home to Fengriffen Manor, where the couple are promptly terrorised by said crawling hand, the scuttling by-product of a family curse (brought about because wretched Herbert Lom couldn't keep it in his trousers, and brutally raped a servant girl centuries earlier).

There's also an axe-wielding psycho on the premises. But never fear, because Peter Cushing is on hand to bring a small element of sanity to the proceedings. Though one gets the feeling this might have played better as a short story in an Amicus omnibus, it is still an entertaining effort, with excellent art direction and achingly sharp photography giving it a classy look that belies its low budget.

*Certificate 18. Running Time: 87 minutes.*

A.B.



## SUCCUBUS

*Redemption Video*

\*\*\*

An S&M nightclub performer who tortures and fondles a manacled victim nightly on stage, believes she is possessed by a demon and begins having difficulty distinguishing reality from fantasy in this bizarre 1968 Jess Franco movie. Janine Reynaud is the succubus of the title, a demon in the shape of a beautiful woman who destroys her partners in lovemaking. Or maybe she's just a mixed-up gal? The average viewer will be pretty mixed up too, because nothing is what it seems here...

Janine makes an appealing monster to be sure, but she is none too convincing as a "devourer of souls." Her over-sexed dreams are photographed in misty, over-exposed sunlight, and we get to see wild psychedelic orgies, plus sinister mannequins that come to life. What's it all about, Alfie - I mean Jess? Don't bother to ask.

Overwhelmingly pretentious in all aspects, the film has all the rambling pointlessness of a bad dream. But if you're a newcomer looking for an archetypal Franco movie to get you started on the road to the hard stuff then you could do a lot worse than put this on your shopping list. Just don't come crying to us when you wake up screaming in a lunatic asylum. *Certificate 18. Running Time: N.T.*

**VIDEO VAULT**

## BLOODY BIRTHDAY

*VIPCO*

\*\*

This vintage slasher features not one, but three (count 'em!) separate slice 'n' dice killers - and they are all just ten years old (which makes this film sadly topical, given the recent real-life murder of toddler James Bulger by a couple of kids of that age). Their

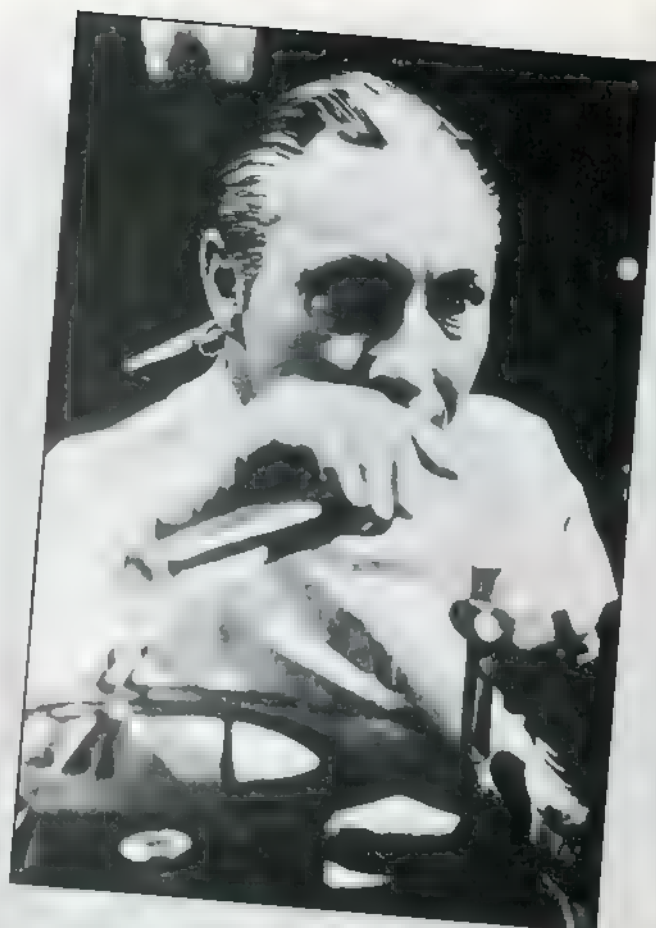
bloodthirsty bad behaviour can be traced back to the fact that they were all born during a total solar eclipse, which doesn't really explain anything other than the fact that the movie's Canadian writer/director Ed Hunt obviously enjoyed THE MIDWICH CUCKOOS.

The murders are pretty tame and lacking in gore - they beat one guy over the head with a shovel, strangle his girlfriend with a rope, and shoot a school-teacher (played by Susan Strasberg). In the film's most perversely disturbing scene, the kids ogle a naked girl through a peephole. Though quite well acted by the youngsters and the likes of Jose Ferrer, it's all very much by the numbers, and unless you are a stalk and slash completist it is one birthday invitation you would be best advised to refuse.

*Certificate 18. Running Time: 80 minutes.*

N.T.

**VIDEO VAULT**



## THE VAMPIRE BAT

*Redemption Video.*

...

If you like your horror movies to creak like a rusted hinge, then this bizarre 1933 chiller might be right up your dark alley. Fresh from tempting KING KONG, the lovely Fay Wray dived into this poverty row horror tale for the independent Majestic Studios which has something of the feel of a Universal picture from the same period because it borrows a lot of Universal sets. The silly story is about a mad scientist (Lionel Atwill) who murders people to drain their blood for a blob of living tissue he keeps in a tank in his laboratory (maybe the pet shop was out of goldfish). "I have lifted the veil," shouts the barmy boffin at one point. "I have created life, wrested the secret of life from life!" Keep taking the tablets, love...

Lionel's spooky house is the one used in THE OLD DARK HOUSE. You'll also be able to spot the village set from FRANKENSTEIN and furnishings from the silent ver-



sion of THE CAT AND THE CANARY. As for Dwight Frye's impression of an idiotic bat-keeper, well that is a straight steal of his spider-eating Renfield in Universal's 1931 DRACULA. The plot is nonsense, but Atwill is good, and Fay screams a lot, as is her forte. It's generally a solid effort that should please fans of early 1930s horror no end.

Certificate PG Running Time: 60 minutes.

A B

## THE HOUSE WHERE DEATH LIVES

VIPCO

Still trawling the depths of their bottomless barrel of obscure exploitation movies, VIPCO come up with this 1981 stinker (aka DELUSION) about a pretty young nurse (Patricia Pearcy) who finds horror and bad acting (though not necessarily in that order) when she takes on the job of looking after ageing millionaire Joseph Cotten. What she doesn't know beforehand is that Cotten has a crazy son locked up in the house, and he is the prime suspect in a series of vicious and bizarre murders. But she soon finds out. Gore fans are in for a long, hard slog with this one, because director Alan Beattie

emphasises the psychological rather than the scatological, and the few special effects we get to see are pretty dismal. It certainly doesn't take a genius to figure out the 'surprise' ending, but we doubt you'll still be awake for it.

Certificate 15. Running Time: 80 minutes

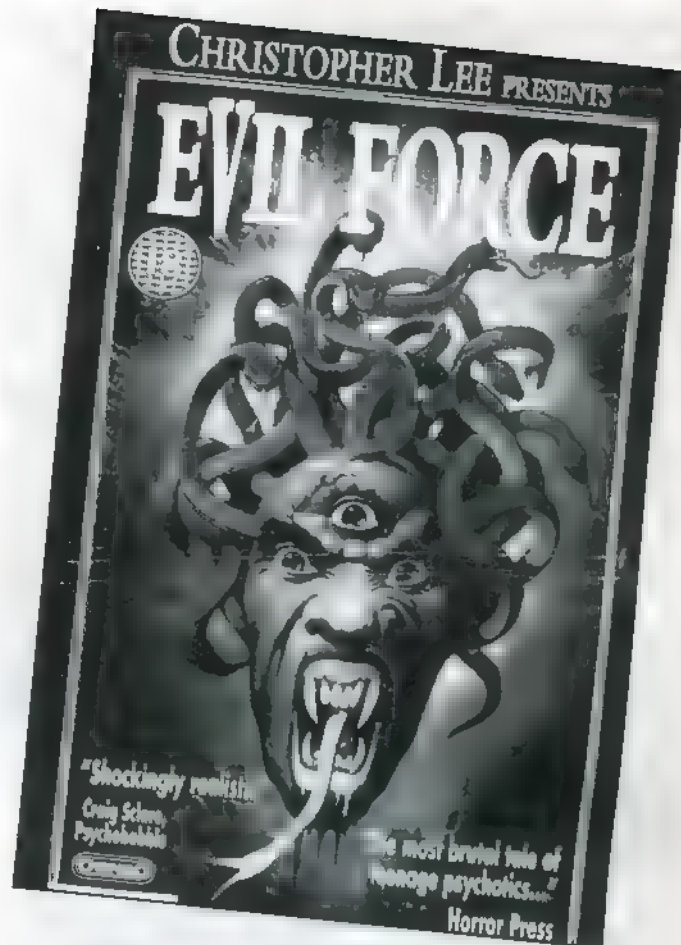
R M

## VIDEO VAULT

### EVIL FORCE

VIPCO

"In the '60s there was PSYCHO. In the '70s came A CLOCKWORK ORANGE. The '80s had HENRY. Then came THE EVIL FORCE..." Whoever wrote the publicity blurb for this movie got their chronology - as well as their facts wrong, because it first saw the light of a projector bulb in 1977 as THE MEAT-CLEAVER MASSACRE (so how come they changed the subtle title?). Christopher Lee is advertised as the star, but in fact he only performs the onscreen narration for the picture. The plot concerns a professor of the occult who is beaten and paralysed by the thugs who kill his family. He then conjures up a demon named 'Merake' to avenge him. The gore effects are pretty cheap, and most of them are



too dark to make out properly. We'd like to recommend the scene where someone is attacked with a cactus, but honesty prevents it. A bloody waste of time.

Certificate 18. Running Time: 84 minutes.

N.T.

## VIDEO VAULT

## DARK SIDE HORROR CARD GIVEAWAY!!!

Okay folks, grab your plastic and hold onto your knicker-elastic, because here we go again with this month's epic horror-card prize-giving. Thanks to the generosity of those kind folk at Medusa Home Video we have twenty copies of the supernatural thriller, SHADOWHUNTER to give away. This stylish shocker features Scott Glenn (of SILENCE OF THE LAMBS fame) as a dedicated lawman on the track of an Indian serial killer with supernatural powers, and all you have to do to win a copy is to match up the number on your flexible friend with any of the numbers printed here. If you can, just send your card along to us, making sure you also enclose a small, stamped, addressed envelope. We'll return it immediately, with a copy of the movie. Mark the outside of the envelope, 'Shadows, but no Cliff,' and please note that the closing date for applications is the end of April. The offer doesn't apply to overseas, but is valid within the UK and Ireland.

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# THE FRANCO FILES

Dissatisfied with the Hollywood mainstream? Looking for unpredictable slices of sex and horror celluloid that defy categorisation? Then what you need is a crash course in the movies of Jesus Franco, Spain's most out-of-control 'auteur.' Cathal Tohill provides this exhaustive profile of the man and his work.

**W**ho is Jess Franco, and why has he made so many goddamn films? More importantly, why should any film fan or horror buff be interested in the demented and sometimes infuriating output of this maverick Spaniard?

Who knows all the answers? I don't. Yet when I see people recoil in horror after being confronted by some Franco abomination, I feel there must be something there that's worth dipping into. Something unusual, something a little outside the norm, and something that may provide its own brand of heady pleasure.

Not everyone feels the same way I do about Franco. One of the prime movers at the Royal College of Art once quipped, "There is a line below which I will not go - and that line is Franco!" Horror fans have always loved the disreputable and the damned, things that have elicited looks of queasy distaste from their elders. This, in a sense, is the appeal of Franco. He dabbles in areas where other filmmakers fear to tread.

Many film fans and horror fanatics are irresistibly attracted to Franco, and over the years a myth has grown up around the man. Nowadays it's fashionable to regard him as an out-of-control cinematic madman - a frantic lensman who makes ten films a week. This picture is pretty one-sided and damned misleading. There's no attempt to get a perspective, a handle on the man or his output.

Over the past 30 years he's made over 150 films, that's an average of 5 or 6 films a year. If you look at them realistically you'll find that not only has he created his own brand of filmmaking, but more surprisingly all his films have a lot in common. On the one hand, Franco flicks share the same obsessions, the same derailed desire to mix eroticism, melodrama, crazed humour, horror and a fertile love of cinema. On the other, they're all different; each reworks these themes differently, mixes them up and spurts them out in a form that is unique. Sometimes



## LOS DEPREDADORES DE LA NOCHE

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### FACELESS

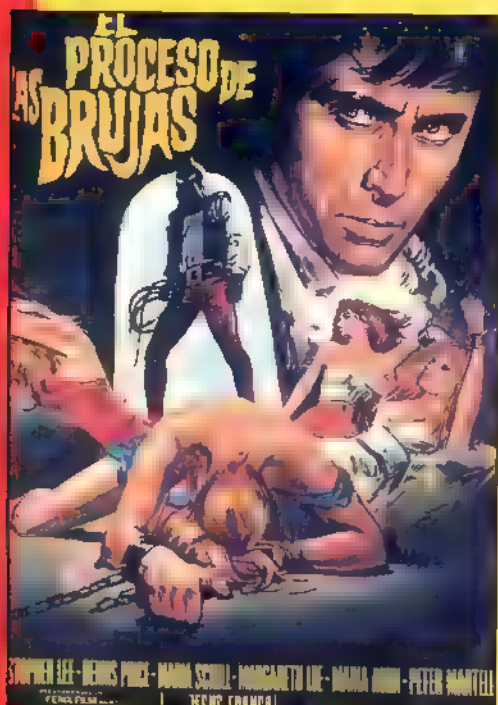
it's a weird, scintillating brew and others it's dog-dull and tiresome.

There are a few who Franco's films seriously, but for some reason he's generally

regarded with derision and disdain. His kooky, irreverent brand of humour may be one of the reasons why his output is frowned upon, sneered at and generally derided. A some-



Of the hundred and fifty films he has turned out, some are undisputed masterpieces, while others cause even the die-hard fans to throw up their hands in dismay, wondering why they persevere. Deep down inside there are many who don't know what to make of his roving camera, his penchant for zooming and throwing the lens out of focus. They haven't quite twigged what makes the old boy tick. The rest of us don't know what to make of him either, but our feeling is, 'What the hell, there's something intriguing there, and we like it. Call us weirdos if you will.'



## THE BLOODY JUDGE

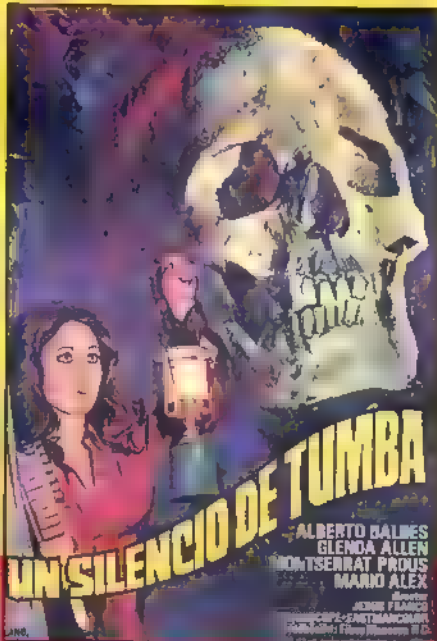
## SLAIN IN SPAIN

Film fans in America, England, Canada and France have instigated a Franco revival, but inside his own country the director's reputation is at an all time low. Spain is renowned for producing mucho serious, stolid slabs of cinema: costume dramas with peasants walking interminably towards the camera; films with a "Social Message" written in block capitals in every frame. Maverick filmmakers like the indefatigable Franco, and kindred spirits such as Bunuel, Naschy and Almodovar are not the norm inside the restricted Spanish film biz. They're visionaries and coldmen, who pay a commercial price for cocking a snook at the nepotistic, turgid system.



The Spanish film audience prefers big budget American imports and has little time for its home grown product. Most Spaniards I've talked to say Franco is avoided by Spanish fans of the popular cinema. It's only the film buffs, the cineastes and out-to-lunch obsessives who have time for his fevered flicks.

## SILENCE OF THE TOMB



Franco's output is wildly inconsistent. Of the 150 or so movies he's helmed, there are less than 20 where the outlandish intensity is sustained for most of the full ninety minutes. The ones that really deliver the goods include **THE AWFUL DR. ORLOFF** (**GRITOS EN LA NOCHE**), **THE DIABOLICAL DR. Z**, **NECROMICON**, **VENUS IN FURS**, **KISS ME MONSTER**, **SINNER**, **VIRGIN AMONG THE LIVING DEAD** and **FACELESS**. That's not to say that all the rest are total crapola, though. Almost every Franco film has at least 5 inspired minutes of total madness and delirium.

But for fantasy film fans, five minutes of inspired dementia is sometimes enough, especially if the filmmaker has done a mess of films with a good deal more of the high octane stuff. What most film savourers don't like is the languorous, wandering bits, or the sections that smack of cliché and familiarity. How do you find out if these lengthy detours are interesting? The simplest method is to glance at the turbulent history of this fertile filmmaker.





FACELESS

## MADMAN WITH A MEGAPHONE

Franco comes from a large family, a family of highbrows, musicians and mathematicians. He's the oddball, the misfit, the wild card - and he's lived his life to the full, sampling all the things that propel his passions into overdrive. His first love was music, and he says, "My younger brother Enrique taught me music before I learned to speak. Naturally my music is very anarchic. I did a course in harmony and piano, but my liking for jazz made me go to jazz instruments."

He started playing early, and by the time he was six he was already addicted. It was to become one of his abiding obsessions. When he was at college he took time off from his studies, and from rabid cinema-going, to play professionally as a drummer and trumpeter, and to whoop it up on the accordion. He played in well known orchestras like Jean Frebert's, Alix Combelle's and Sigfrid Erhart's.

If music was his first love, his second passion was cinema. He says, "I thought about being a director when I was 9 years old. I could imagine myself in director's clothes, the jodphurs, the megaphone and the director's hat. When I was 12 years old, I used to play with my brother, guessing the directors and the actors of films that were shown in town. I hardly ever failed. When I went to the cinema it was to see the work of the directors."

Though definitely a guiding force, cinema is just one of his passions. The others include everything from chewing down on spicy Catalan sausages (and other gourmet delights), to devouring a plethora of musical gems and forgotten literary items. In fact one of the nefarious Spaniard's most famous nom de plumes, David Khune, was inspired by a literary chum of Dickens - David K. Hume, who was Dickens' right hand man and a hefty inspiration to this popular storyteller.

If this gives you some idea of how deeply Franco has delved into the literary past, take it from me that his cinematic eyeballing has been even more committed, wide ranging and intensive. While studying in Paris he visited the Cinematheque Francaise so often, its main man Henri Langois used to

FACELESS



let him in for free!

In fact Langois arranged a number of private screenings for Franco, so he could catch up with a few of the gems he'd missed. These included some flicks by the legendary maestro of decadence and realism, the crop-wielding Erich Von Stroheim. This restless soaking up of all types of cinematic esoterica wings through his films - they all contain some sort of nudge to cinema's glorious past. The list of references is endless, though probably ultimately only of interest to list makers and other sorts of anal retards and goons. In fact an article on this would more than fill any magazine aimed at the trivia hound.

Some fantasy and horror fans are film buffs, some aren't. Does Franco have anything to offer folks who like to chow down on blood, gore and things creepily macabre? Yes, I think he does. For starters he's a lover of the much maligned genre of cinefantastique, and has always championed its perverse charms.

"I've always thought the fantastic genre is one of the noblest of genres," says Franco. "When I was 8 years old, I used to escape from school to go to the cinema, and these films have left their marks on me. To me, Mabuse, Dracula and Frankenstein are the dreams of my life, like old friends from my childhood."

In fact these dreams of horror so inspired the young Franco that his first full length feature, WE ARE 18 (TENEMOS DIECIOCHO ANOS), which starts off as a whimsical comedy, ends up with an inspired break into ghoulish cheesy horror.

Throughout his career, he's recycled his favourite horror items; from the intellectual sadism of Edgar Allan Poe, through to eerie Edgar Wallace and high profile icons



like Dracula and Frankenstein. Many might groan, and say "Oh no, not that old crap again!" but Franco managed to revitalize these creaky old warhorses by adding a wild dose of eroticism mixed with his own brand of spontaneity and unbridled vitality. As he says himself, "Nobody can deny that I try to breathe new life into the essentials of the Gothic myth." For my money, you can forget Coppola's DRACULA. Give this obsessed Spaniard some big budget moolah and he'll make sparks fly with a Sex'n'Stoker shocker par excellence!



FACELESS

## THE SIREN CALL OF SEX

Most Franco films are shot on a minuscule budget with a crew of around ten people. He always tries to work with the same team, which means he doesn't have to explain things every time. It's small-scale film production, and consequently the whole thing is personal, wayward and fascinatingly unique.

FACELESS

"As I shoot I imagine an audience of one, two or three people," says our Jess - most perceptively, I should think. "It never occurs to me that I'm making a film for a large audience."

His actors and crew share his zest for life, his love of the cinema and his erotic compulsions. Franco sneaks sex into everything, and if it isn't thwap-bang in the foreground it's lurking steamily just under the surface. You can't escape the siren call of sex

when you watch a Franco film, and as usual he's down to earth and honest about it, saying: "It's an element of our daily lives, and one of the most important ones, because it's one of the motives for existence."

His first horror film, THE AWFUL DR. ORLOFF was a bit of a mind-thumper for its time, and created a stir because of its mixture of visceral horror and flagrant eroticism. Who could forget the brazen nudity, especially when it was

coupled with disfigured monsters and indecent experiments? ORLOFF was a bona fide horror classic, made all the more potent by a granite cool performance from Howard Vernon as the dashing Mad Doctor. Vernon gave a solid intensity to the part. He was scary and suave as the deranged Doc, a pernicious evil beast who lured a ample-chested lovelies into his chamber of doom.

Vernon is a typical Franco collaborator: intelligent, highly individual and with his own brand of charisma and charm. His face is instantly memorable. He could have been a big star,





but he choose to go his own way and live life as he pleased. These sort of people seem to gravitate towards Franco, and his films have a gallery of familiar faces, all strangely attractive and compulsively watchable. He makes movies with his friends and most of these don't fit any particular mould.

In my opinion he's always been a Jazzman. A jazzman, a guy

who likes spontaneity and surprise. For many people, jazz is meandering and doesn't seem to go anywhere. Any jazz player is always reaching out for inspiration, trying to play an old tune and make it sound fresh. Sometimes it comes out dull and clichéd, but if the mood is right, maybe he'll turn out something wild, new and totally unheard of. It makes sense that Franco should say, "What I like about cinema is the surprise. When I go to see a film and after 10 minutes I know exactly what's going to happen, then I leave." In his movies he's always trying to do something spontaneous and interesting. That's why he pans, zooms and knocks the camera out of focus. Some folks like it, others trot away in bemused horror.

## FROM OLIVES TO ORLOFF

Franco's early films are a far cry from his later excursions into excessive eroticism. Who'd have thought that this maker of fleshy fear flicks would have started out by making a short documentary about the Olive and its by-products - *ABOL DE ESPANOL* (1957). But I guess you've got to begin somewhere!

His next two shorts were a trifle more upmarket. *PIO BAROJA* (1958), an homage to the esteemed poet, won several awards worldwide and did little to prepare the unsuspecting world for the off-the-wall stuff that would come. His other shorts from this period were also fairly high-brow. *JOURNEY TO THE YEAR 100* was based on a philosophical essay by Julian Marias, and *LA*



*CHANSON DE ROLAND* was based on some verses of a poem and featured what was to become a favourite Franco device, the subjective pan.

After this he stepped into the film business proper and directed the comedy, *WE ARE 18*. But his first real break came with *THE AWFUL DR. ORLOFF*. This film and its sequel, *DR. ORLOFF'S MONSTER*, proclaimed the arrival of a major new talent.

His first few films were helmed under his real name - Jesus Franco. But for *THE AWFUL DR. ORLOFF* his name was shortened to Jess Franco. It was decided to change it in order to avoid misunderstandings and outrage. After all, what would any American

P. Johnson etc. Others, like Jess Frank, were foisted on him by producers and distributors, who felt these names sounded more home grown to their European audience.

Of course this tangled mess of names makes it hard to pin down his many films as the single work of one 'auteur.' It also makes it impossible for some critics to take him seriously, because how can you take seriously a guy who doesn't seem to care whether he gets credit for his films or not? But in Franco's case, criticism should be tossed quickly aside. His films are best enjoyed for their hopped-up moments, strange scenarios and perverse delights. No one else makes films quite like Franco. If anything he has too many ideas, too many fevered fantasies hurtling around in his brain.

For many film critics, *THE AWFUL DR. ORLOFF* announced the emergence of a major new talent. But with each progressive film, Franco slipped further down the path towards delirium and sexual excess. He broke the rules and went his own way. The critical establishment ignored his occasional high-octane genius, and it was really the fans, French cineastes, who kept his name afloat.

French film fanatics like Pierre Charles, Pascal Martinez and Lucas Balbo must take credit for having meticulously documented the great man's output. They sifted through the tangle of aliases, divided his work up into periods and produced meticulous filmographies. This staunch work formed the basis of almost every in-depth English language stab at







## BLOODY MOON (X)

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dealing with Franco's films. By dividing his work up into periods it's easy to see the influence each batch of producers has had on his movies.

But despite all sorts of changes, Franco's preoccupations have always remained constant. He likes mixing things up, combining things, producing his own crazed potpourri of sex, sin, melodrama and horror. Most of all he likes women in strange situations, from fantabulous night club acts to voluptuous vixens who leave death in their wake. Women are the axis on which his films spin, and no one puts them into more kooky scenarios than Monsieur Franco.

## MISS DEATH AND THE ROBOTS

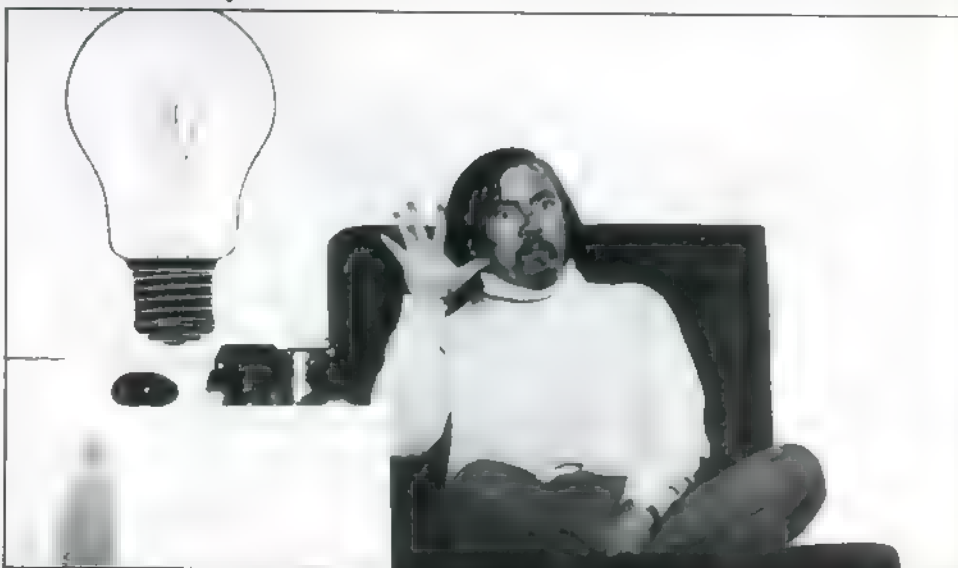
THE DIABOLICAL DR. Z (MISS MUERTE, 1965) is one of the great Franco films and shows all his predilections in full swing. The plot evolves around an evil babe, the daughter of Dr. Von Zimmer. Zimmer was the man who invented the Z ray - not the Zimmer Frame! A top notch scientist and test tube tinkerer par excellence, his only flaw is his obsession with the work of that dirty devil Dr. Orloff. He builds a lab to house his sleazy, mechanical, spider-like contraption, and with the aid of his daughter's brutal stabs at acupuncture, he manages to control people for good or evil. After Zimmer pops his clogs, his daughter assumes control and takes his work to new and macabre heights. Her first step towards bigtime skull-duggery is to go skinny dipping with some saucy babe with a perfect hairdo. She zaps this sweetie, burns her to death and slams the car plus body into a nearby river. After this she chalks up

the names of her father's enemies on the lab blackboard and proceeds to snuff them out one by one.

Like any evil genius she needs an unwilling accomplice to fulfill her cracked mission. In true Franco style she finds the right person in the middle of the nearest cheesy nightclub. While dining there she witnesses an extra-ordinary act. A perfectly formed gal, Miss Death (Estella Blain), does a surreal and sexily stunning routine, decked up in a see-through body-stocking with a stitched on spider. This babe can really move, and her act consists of her plucking her way along a giant web, seducing a mannequin, popping on a death mask and flashing her hideously compelling long, painted nails. In short - classic Franco!

It's obvious that this bizarre act inexorably infuses the brain of the derailed daughter, and pretty soon she has Miss Death in the glisteningly evil clutches of the spider-like contraption. After this it's death and seduc-

*Franco watches one of his own movies*



tion all the way with the divine Miss D luring and killing a mottled assortment of world famous scientists using her poison dipped nails. In a typical Franco touch she has her nails dipped in the dreaded curare - one scratch means instant death! Her reign of lust and terror is eventually put to an end by a clunky inspector, played for cheap laughs by the man himself, Jesus Franco. This bumbler, a harassed father of three, finally solves the case after he's had a good nights sleep!

THE DIABOLICAL DR. Z is one of many Franco films that flirt with the ecstatically perverse. His next film, ATTACK OF THE ROBOTS, was a change of pace, and more a spy thriller mixed with kookie comedy than anything else. Also known as CARDS ON THE TABLE, it was a hell-for-leather spoof that centred around a breed of killer robots - zombie-like men who run around in shades, black polo necks and well-pressed grey suits. The plot is pretty far-fetched, with its hero ending up in an opium den in Asia, and the robots changing colour when they eventually get gazumped. Originally made in colour, only a few black and white prints remain of this rather odd film. However, it should be noted that a lot of the off-the-wall humour and go-for-broke velocity is lost in the heavy handed dubbing; all in all, a bit of a disappointment.

After ATTACK OF THE ROBOTS, Franco turned out another thriller, HOUSE FOR SPIES. Like the previous movie, this starred crater-faced Eddie Constantine, whose most memorable role was as the raincoated private eye in Jean Luc Godard's ALPHAVILLE. HOUSE OF SPIES was a bit of a disaster, and more or less signaled Franco's total dismay about ever producing anything decent or imaginative with any Spanish film company. It wasn't just the nepotism and the bureaucracy that peeved him - it was the lack of freedom. Freedom for a guy like Franco meant everything, including the freedom to do what he liked, regardless of the consequences. Nothing was going to hem him in.



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## THE CRY FOR FREEDOM

Despite this growing disillusionment, Franco's next film, *LUCKY, THE INSCRUTABLE*, was one of his best. An out-of-control adventure film that knows no boundaries, *LUCKY* is a movie that touches all the bases from terror to absurdity. This was a far cry from the morbid obsessions of *THE AWFUL DR. ORLOFF* or *THE DIABOLICAL DR. Z*. It was rip-roaring yarn about a typical Franco superhero, a guy with a big 'L' on his chest. Ray Danton was the lead in *LUCKY*, and it's obvious that he was intoxicated by the freedom Franco gave him. He spends the whole film goofing around, delivering neat one liners and generally having a damned fine time. In a lesser man's hand freedom equals banality, but with Danton and Franco it was sheer delight. In *LUCKY*, Danton romps around, rolling from one bizarre event to another. Eventually he finds himself tortured by some evil she-cat in black stockings, suspenders and a dictatorial uniform. How does he escape? You'll have to catch the film to find out.

### MACISTE VS. THE AMAZON QUEEN



With *LUCKY* under his belt, it looked like Franco was on a roll, and his next few films were free wheeling and intoxicating. Perhaps the fact he had jettisoned the pervasive restrictions of Spanish co-production had something to do with it. If *LUCKY* was boyish and hell for leather, his next epic, *NECRONOMICON* (released in the UK as *SUCCUBUS*), was more like Hitchcock's *VERTIGO* seen through an opium haze. Part mysterious psychological thriller and part pastiche, the whole thing had a kinky comic book intensity to it. This was the film that caused Fritz Lang to pull out the hyperbole and declare it the best erotic thriller he had managed to sit all the way through...

*NECRONOMICON* is a gossamer-like creation. A little real and more than a little unreal, it drifts from hazy fantasy to cheesy nightclubs and back. One highly memorable scene pops up near the end where Lorna (Janine Reynaud) commits psychic murder in a room full of mannequins

*NECRONOMICON* is also one of the few films to feature Adrian Hoven, producer of the infamous video nasty, *MARK OF THE DEVIL*. While Franco was shooting this movie, Hoven used the same actors and sets to deliver *THE CASTLE OF BLOODY LUST*. But if the truth be told, Hoven's horror outing has little of *NECRONOMICON*'s gloss, style and pop-art pizzazz. You can check this one out for yourself on the Redemption Video label

In this period, Franco was really getting into his own, with slightly bigger budgets, colour production and zippy continental locations. It looked like he was going to be unstoppable! *LUCKY* and *NECRONOMICON* were full of verve and zip. Looking back at them nowadays, they both seem quintessentially Sixties - packed with bubbly muzak, vivid colours and outrageous fashions. In fact *NECRONOMICON* was one of Franco's most financially successful films.

His next film featured the main female lead from

SHIRLEY EATON  
RICHARD WYLER  
GEORGE SANDERS  
MARIA RONN

## THE GIRL FROM RIO



*NECRONOMICON*, Janine Reynaud and it's a kooky confection to say the least. Although given a slating by many critics, *KISS ME MONSTER* is a film that has aged well, it has an irresistible verve and moves with an unstoppable gaudy motion. Two girls embark on a mysterious trail that results in everyone they meet getting hacked or blown away. At one point a character sighs, "Really, at this point, I don't understand anything anymore," and the audience agrees. The costumes and the music are unspeakably bright and glitzy, and the music is as overwhelming as it is candy-coated and bizarre. The trail of good natured mayhem ends in a castle with some gruesome surgery, which for my money only adds to the overall tone of good natured dementia.

This was followed by *SADISTEROTICA*, which also featured Janine Reynaud to good effect. Adrian 'Mr. Bad Taste' Hoven also helped out with the production and direction in this wild-eyed horror flick. Like *KISS ME MONSTER*, it was an unusual little horror outing - how many other films do you know where the two leads are played by two yummy women? (*THELMA & LOUISE*, Franco style?).

Like *MONSTER*, the film evolved around these two lovelies and their search for the unspeakable - this time it was an eye-patched demented killer, played by Adrian Hoven. He had a neat way with murder, and liked to encase his victims in clay, turning them into stone-dead, immobile works of art. When it was originally released, the film was considered quite beyond the pale, and 13 blood soaked minutes had to be trimmed to make it suitable for public consumption.





WHITE CANNIBAL QUEEN

## JESS, HARRY, AND 99 WOMEN

NECRONOMICON, KISS ME MONSTER and SADISTEROTICA were all made for the German-based Aquila company. For his next nine films, Franco collaborated with the infamous Harry Alan Towers - the films were produced by Towers' production company, Towers of London. Quite a few of these were fairly big budget epics, especially by Franco standards. For the first time he had big stars, elaborate costumes and a least the scent of a class production. Towers' wife, the luscious Maria Rohm, starred in a number of these Franco-Towers epics.

The first of the batch was THE BLOOD OF FU MANCHU (aka KISS AND KILL and AGAINST ALL ODDS), which was written by 'Peter Welbeck' (a well-known pseudonym for Harry Alan Towers). The plot - which bears some resemblance to that of Mario Bava's DR. GOLDFOOT AND THE GIRL BOMBS, had Chris Lee's Fu Manchu poisoning the lips of 10 beautiful women and sending them around the world to deliver deadly snogging sessions to important diplomats. Shirley Eaton had a cameo role as a character called The Black Widow. Most prints of this one are fairly mild, but some sex scenes were shot for the continental market - one of them involving a bare-breasted Maria Rohm chained to a dungeon wall.

Next came CASTLE OF FU MANCHU (1968 - aka ASSIGNMENT ISTANBUL), a mixed up hot-potch of black and white footage and colour. Featuring a phoned-in performance from Lee and a pervasively erotic one by a cross-dressed Rosalba Neri ("Sara Bay

from LADY FRANKENSTEIN), it also has a cameo by Franco as a police inspector. Some fans love it, while others find it an interminable bore.

If 1967 was a creative year for Franco, 1968 looked like it might be even better. At last it looked like he might be given the budget and production values to show the world what he was capable of. His next few films all had fairly big name American stars. Admittedly, some of them were on the way down, yet they were stars none the less.

But despite the production values, the big names and the freedom from Spanish repression, something just wasn't right. Although his films for Towers look superficially better, the old Franco zestful craziness is missing. Something just wasn't working out. After CASTLE OF FU MANCHU he returned to his old favourite, Sax Rohmer. Lindsay Shonteff had had a stab at directing THE MILLION

EYES OF SUMURU, a female Fu Manchu epic starring Shirley Eaton, but producer Towers was not happy with the way it had turned out. So Franco was brought in to shoot additional scenes that reduced the black comedy element. The resultant movie still bears Shonteff's credit, but most of the sexy stuff is by Jess.

On the back of this, Jess made another Shirley Eaton Su Muru epic called THAT GIRL FROM RIO (aka RIO 70). The plot of this one has Shirley running an all-female village in the Amazon jungle and trying to take over the world again. George Sanders co-stars with Maria Rohm, and Peter Welbeck provided the screenplay.

After the exotic hokum of the Su Muru movies, Franco took his first plunge into the seedy world of the "Women in Prison" film

## THE SINISTER ORGIES OF DOCTOR ORLOFF



(usually known as W.I.P. films for short). 99 WOMEN (1968) was relatively big budget and serious, with a fairly hefty message to deliver about impotence, voyeurism, sadism and power. It was an area that Franco would return to again and again. I feel that somehow a prison full of pent-up women, some vulnerable and many sexually frustrated is an idea that strikes a chord with him, as it does with many males. How else would you explain the countless number of Women in Prison Films - over 200 at the last count!

After the tepid torture and general numbness of 99 WOMEN (a movie that nevertheless made a great deal of money for producer Towers), Franco turned his guns on The Marquis de Sade. De Sade had a particular fascination for Franco - like most intellectu-



## SADIST OF NOTRE DAME

als he found De Sade's ideas timeless, vital and important. It also made good commercial sense: films based on the works of the divine Marquis always did well at the box office, especially during the Sixties.

JUSTINE (1968) was a real period piece, replete with evil Counts in powdered wigs who feed beautiful women poisoned drinks, relishing the moments before they die to cackle decadently, "At last, the supreme moment! To make love to a beautiful nymph just before she dies, how exquisite! This is the finest moment of my life!"

Although JUSTINE is full of such perversely decadent moments, it's still a bit of a loser. On the one hand, Jack Palance is truly over the top and inspired to the point of absolute dementia. On the other, the main female lead, Romina Power, is lifeless and abominable - a cardboard cut-out on two legs. Despite its faults, JUSTINE did reasonably well at the box office. It has its moments, but it's by no means a typical Franco flick - there are very few touches of imagination and creative madness. It's the most



superficially realistic of all Franco's films, and also one of his most tepid.

In contrast, his next film, **VENUS IN FURS** (aka **BLACK ANGEL** and **DE SADE '70**), is almost totally subjective, totally impressionistic - and totally Franco. The title was added by the U.S. producers to make it more saleable in the U.S. grindhouses and drive-ins; the film itself has nothing to do with the Leopold von Sacher-Masoch book, or with Sado Masochism in general. It's one of the most lyrical, fragile and personal films ever to come out of Europe, and is more of a mystery film with patches of eroticism than anything else.

With this film Franco created a new type of cinema, a cinema beyond categories. **VENUS IN FURS** is the story of trumpet player James Darren, told in hallucinatory flashbacks. Whipped up to fever pitch by a hot Manfred Mann/Mike Hugg jazz score, it's unlike anything else I've ever seen. Unlike **JUSTINE**, it's totally misty and dream-like, and this is the type of cinema Franco is best at. But while **NECRONOMICON** did well at the box office, **VENUS** did not. It's too personal a film. Punters want sex or chills, they don't want to drift and dream. Or do they?

him than working with the ever popular Terence Fisher!

Franco's next horror outing, **COUNT DRACULA**, was a bit of a disappointment, though it did have some good ideas and a strong cast which included Christopher Lee, Klaus Kinski and the ever beautiful Soledad Miranda. Franco says he very much enjoyed working with Klaus: "I think he is one of the best horror actors. His personality, his aura, his style of acting. We understand each other very well."

Jess wanted to do a faithful adaptation of Stoker's book, and to some extent he succeeded. There are some nifty touches, like the scene where the vampire hunters are terrorised by stuffed animals, but overall it's a dull and dreary film, with particularly bad special effects. Lee's performance was excellent, but it was far too good for the shoddy surroundings. Franco himself appeared as a manservant

It's clear that something just wasn't right in the Towers-Franco collaboration. Why were his earlier films so good and these ones so goddamn flat? But his last collaboration with Towers was a definite improvement, and is now generally regarded as one of his best films (as well as being touted as, "One of the most truly Sadean films ever made!")

Its title was **EUGENIE: THE STORY OF HER JOURNEY INTO PERVERSION** (aka **PHILOSOPHY IN THE BOUDOIR**), and it starred Maria Rohm as a wealthy and jaded follower of the Marquis De Sade who lets a man seduce on the condition that his beautiful and virginal young daughter Eugenie (Maria Liljedahl) be sent to her private island for a weekend. Once there the poor girl is drugged, beaten and forced to participate in orgies. The trick ending gives us a **DEAD OF NIGHT** type twist. Christopher Lee plays Dolmance, the onscreen narrator of this memorable sickie - and very uncomfortable he looks, too!



99 WOMEN

## PORNO HOLOCAUST

Franco's growing disillusionment with the Harry Alan Towers' productions led him to look for other producers and collaborators. In 1970 he turned out a female **Dr. Jekyll** film, **MRS. HYDE**, with Soledad Miranda as the knife-wielding vamp who cuts the nuts off her ageing lovers. This was a pretty gaudy and gruesome outing, featuring great costumes, lurid decor and boomingly kitschy musak. Soledad was superb in the lead, and Fred Williams was damn fine as the louche lover who tops himself and sends her spiraling on the kiss and kill road to damnation.

From here on the Franco filmography begins to get tricky, as it was around this period that he began to turn out different versions of his films for different countries. At that time, each country had different censorship restrictions. In the U.S.A., eroticism was more or less taboo and each European country had its own level of restriction. The result was that you ended up with the same film being recut and retitled, depending on the market it was aimed at.

Sometimes extra stuff was reshot and added by the producers, or bits were cut out and left on the cutting room floor. In short Franco began to have less and less control over the final product. There was a high price to pay for his outlaw status and independence. He was at the mercy of mercenary businessmen, dollar chasers and financial wolves. If it was bad in the early seventies it would get worse. Later on, porno scenes would have to be added. Sometimes he did these himself, other times they were just thrown in by whoever was handling the prints.

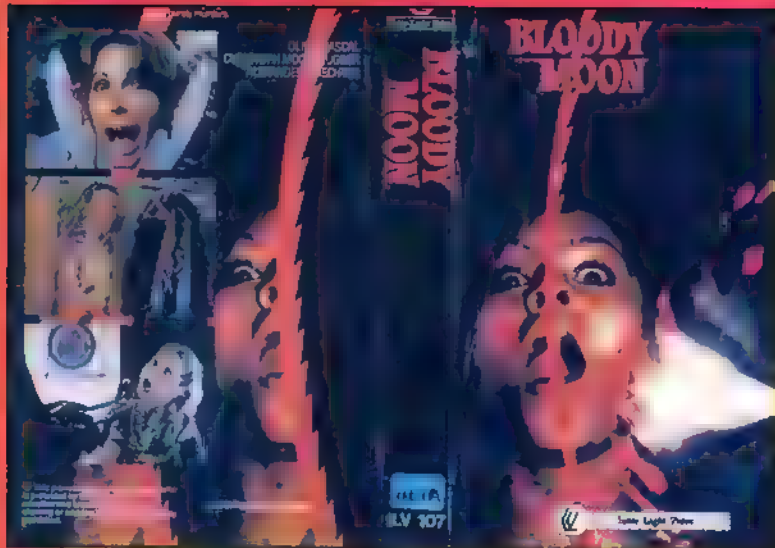
Two versions of **X-312 FLIGHT TO HELL** exist, and there are numerous versions of **VAMPYROS LESBOS** and **VIRGIN AMONG THE LIVING DEAD**. The latter is actually available on video in the UK and tells of a young woman (Christina von Blanc) who travels to the villa of a dead uncle to attend the reading of his will. There's a spooky dream sequence where she sees her zombie uncle hung from a noose, floating



VAMPIRE LESBOS

And so Franco returned to gruesome horror. **NIGHT OF THE BLOOD MONSTER** (1969) was his particularly grisly entry into **WITCHFINDER GENERAL** terrain. It was a coldly impersonal film despite its moments of over-the-top torture and mutilation. Christopher Lee starred as the pernicious patriarch Judge Jeffries, and Franco's chum Howard Vernon turned in another fine performance as a body-stockinged sadist. Christopher Lee has always spoken highly of Franco, even when it was totally unfashionable to do so. It's clear his work with Franco left more of an impression on





through the forest, but the film is very much a piecemeal affair, probably because Franco later filmed hard-core sequences to make it commercial - these are cut out of the UK version of course! In hard-core form it is known as **CHRISTINA - PRINCESS OF EROTICISM**.

This period of film production has its highs and lows, and although the budgets were smaller than the previous period, you get the feeling that it was a less worried Franco who was turning out the stuff. He really began to branch out, churning out brightly coloured Edgar Wallace epics (**DEATH PACKS A SUITCASE**), sexy vampire homages (**VAMPYROS LESBOS**), weirdo horror thrillers (**THE DEVIL CAME FROM AKASAWA**, **THE VENGEANCE OF DR. MABUSE**), as well as a mixed bag of goodies which ran the gamut from **DE SADE 2000** to **ROBINSON CRUSOE (THE SEXY DARLINGS, 1970)** No other film-maker that I can think of has an output that includes adapting Jules Verne for kiddies, turning out lusty erotic thrillers, Sadean epics and bubbly comedies, and descending with gusto to the bargain basement of the **Women in Prison** films. No other filmmaker except Franco!

#### GISS ME MONSTER



anyone who has the chance to see them a more rewarding experience. **LORNA**, on the other hand, is a one of the few red-light horror films, a film that enters the cheesy terrain of the European horror comic. Words like bad taste should be thrown out when talking about **LORNA**: here is a film that is at the very limits of the erotic and horror imagination - an unsettling, and I guess must-see, item.

Other Franco epics worth tracking down from the same period include **THE DEMONS (1972)**, which was directed by "Clifford Brown" and turns out to be a semi-sequel to **NIGHT OF THE BLOOD MONSTER**. Chris Lee was obviously busy elsewhere, so John Foster took the role of the brutal Judge Jeffries. He and his two sadistic compatriots burn a witch at the stake, but her dying curse causes chaos at the local nunnery! With plenty of explicit lesbian love scenes and a grating heavy metal score, this is certainly one to keep you awake.

**DRACULA, PRISONER OF FRANKENSTEIN (1972)** was screened late night by ITV not that long ago, and there must be plenty of puzzled insomniacs who think they had an out of body experience watching it. With a script that borrows from the old Universal monster rallies, it has a tired-looking Dennis Price playing Baron Frankenstein. He discovers the remains of Count Dracula (Howard Vernon in ridiculous green make-up), and after bringing him back to life uses him to procure young women! An incredibly boring film, this one - for Franco completists only.

#### SWISS FRANCO!

European film production is in a state of flux, constantly changing, shifting and moving. Franco usually encountered problems when making films with other people, and so he decided to set up his own production company. The name he chose, Manacoa, comes from a Spanish comic and is the name given to a paradisiac town full of pretty women. It's the type of place that Franco would like to dwell. With his own production company he completed four films including **THE SIN-**

From this period of production there are a couple of stand-out films: **VIRGIN AMONG THE LIVING DEAD** and **LORNA THE EXORCIST**. As mentioned, the former was released in this country, butchered, mutilated and totally desecrated, yet it still had its charms. The German and Italian versions are more complete and offer

**SINISTER EYES OF DR. ORLOFF** These films are more hallucinatory and less outrightly commercial than his other work. I'd certainly rate **SINISTER EYES** as one of his best.

Also of note is **THE BARE BREASTED COUNTESS** (aka **EROTIKILL** or **THE LOVES OF IRINA**), which was made in three different versions. Lina Romay - later to become Franco's wife - played Countess Irina Karlstein, who takes out her vampiric lust on metaphysical poet Jack Taylor. The horror version, **EROTIKILL**, runs considerably shorter (30 mins) than the hardcore **LOVES OF IRINA**, which is supposedly hotter than a weekend's sunbathing at Chernobyl!

After setting up Manacoa films, Jess found himself having to take on a variety of low grade work in order to finance it. In the mid Seventies pornography more or less took over the video and film industry in France, and a similar event took place in Spain a few years after the death of the oppressive General Franco. So the opportunities for low budget European filmmakers got less and less.

From the mid Seventies onwards Franco more or less embraced market demands. He's the type of guy who'd rather be making any kind of cinema rather than no cinema at all. Above all he's an enthusiast. In some ways this is his weakness, but in other ways it's his strength, and the reason why film fans have time for his output no matter how low it goes. He's the kind of filmmaker who will always turn round and surprise you.

**99 WOMEN** was his first "Women in Prison" film, but it certainly wasn't his last. In the Seventies he churned many more of them out for the Elite company and Erwin C. Deitrich. With titles like **BARBED WIRE DOLLS**, **CAGED WOMEN** and **ILSA: WICKED WARDEN**, they retread the same ground as **99 WOMEN**, but are more explicit than psychological in their denouement.

**BARBED WIRE DOLLS** reiterates **99 WOMEN** in an even more explicit fashion, with Lina Romay and two others breaking out of a shoddy jungle prison and being pursued by the sadistic Monica Swinn. A flashback sequence shows Romay being abused by her sick father (Franco's cameo!). **ILSA: WICKED WARDEN** doesn't have much connection with the notorious Don Edmonds trilogy of **SHE WOLF/HAREM KEEPER/TIGRESS OF SIBERIA** that pre-





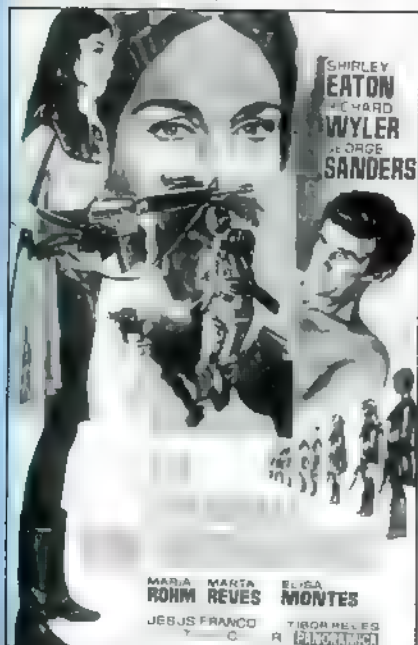
ceded it. In fact it was originally known as **GREAT, THE MAD BUTCHER** and **WANDA THE WICKED WARDEN** before it was retitled to capitalise on the video success of the earlier Dyanne Thorne flicks.

One of Franco's most controversial pictures from this period was **JACK THE RIPPER** (1976), with Klaus Kinski playing the title role of a philanthropic doctor who spends his nights ripping whores on the streets of Whitechapel until he is finally tricked into giving himself away by undercover police-woman Josephine Chaplin (daughter of Charlie). The sets and performances are unexpectedly impressive, and the gore is extreme. This is easily one of Franco's most determinedly mainstream movies, but unfortunately it has never been released in the UK.

For horror fans and lovers of the ghoulish, the most interesting item from this period is **MONDO CANNIBALE** (1979 - aka **WHITE CANNIBAL QUEEN**), a sort of companion piece to the later and weirder **DEVIL HUNTER**, both essential viewing for folks who like films that feature frenzied natives chomping down on human flesh. The plot has a little girl washed ashore in the jungle after her parents are attacked by a truly ridiculous-looking cannibal tribe. The locals aren't that hungry at present, so they decide to adopt their find as their resident Goddess. Ten years later, the girl's father (played by Al Cliver, star of Fulci's **ZOMBIE FLESH EATERS**) leads a search to find her. Very low on both gore and sex, this is still worth seeing. Franco also wrote the music score.

**DEVIL HUNTER** (aka **MANHUNTER**) was started by **BLIND DEAD** honcho Amando De Ossorio and completed by Franco under his "Clifford Brown" pseudonym. The slapdash plot had pretty Ursula Fellner (a Playboy Playmate) being abducted by ransom seekers, who chain and abuse her. But rescue is at hand in the shape of a flesh-

#### THE GIRL FROM RIO



hungry zombie who stumbles into their jungle camp in search of a snack! The film has its amusing moments, but in general it's a bit pathetic. Again, Jess also scored it.

**HELLHOLE WOMEN** (1980) was a memorable WIP movie from this period. Also known as **SADOMANIA**, it stars the late transsexual actress Ajita Wilson as the regulation sadistic lesbian warden of an all-girl slammer located on a remote island. Franco contributed one of his most outrageous cameo roles here, playing a gay white slave trader who we are introduced to while he is being sodomised by a native boy!

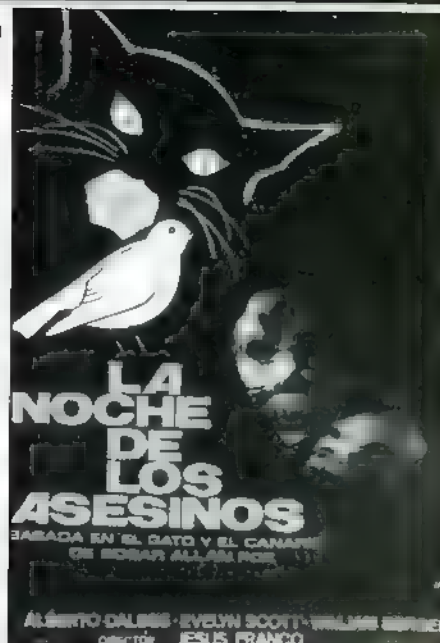
At the beginning of 1980, Franco ended his collaboration with Elite Films and returned to Spain. One of the first films he produced back in his home country (as a West German co-production) was the infamous video nasty, **BLOODY MOON**, which has been described as, "wilder and crazier than **FRIDAY THE 13TH**!" The main lead, the juicy Olivia Pascal, was bit of a Franco favourite, and she suffered gamely through this bloodthirsty **FRIDAY THE 13TH** clone that featured a great 'head in a buzz-saw' scene. Franco cameos as a doctor.

After this came the wilderness years for Franco, as the changes rung inside the Spanish film industry pushed him further into porno. It was either that or wooden costume dramas with plenty of turgid dialogue. There was the odd semi-interesting film such as **MACUMBE SEXUALE** and **THE GIRL WITH THE RED LIPS**, but most were forgettable potboilers. The only movie of this period worth recommending is **MOANS OF PLEASURE** (1981), a semi-hardcore programmer telling of how Lina Romay is abused at the hands of a sadist.

Throughout the 80s, Franco's pseudonyms can be found on movies like **OASIS OF THE ZOMBIES** (credited to A.M. Frank), in which teenage treasure-hunters fall foul of the Nazi zombies guarding the stash. This contains footage of Franco's uncompleted **TOMBS OF THE LIVING DEAD**, and though slow moving it should keep gore fans happy with its footage of maggot-ridden faces and graphic cannibalism.

Franco's **REVENGE IN THE HOUSE OF USHER** (1983) hardly remains true to the spirit of Edgar Allan Poe. In actuality, this is a cut-and-paste re-mix of Franco's unreleased **CRIMES OF USHER**, which stars Howard Vernon as the 200-year-old Dr. Usher. Vernon's disfigured brother (played by Oliver Mathot) abducts young girls for experimental transfusions to keep Usher's blood-diseased daughter alive. With cheap special effects (the final collapse of the house of Usher is achieved by shaking the camera!), the film is a real mess. It even incorporates mismatched black and white clips from **AWFUL DR. ORLOFF**...

Replaced by Andrea Bianchi on the 1986 **ANGEL OF DEATH** (a **BOYS FROM BRAZIL** ripoff about Nazi atrocities which he scripted under the pseudonym of A. Frank



#### NIGHT OF THE ASSASSINS

Drew White), it almost looked as if Franco was stagnating. But then he was offered a hefty European co-production called **FACELESS** (1988). This is his finest film for many a year and the news that it may be released in the U.K. should be greeted with a resounding cheer from horror fans everywhere.

**FACELESS** is the hottest slab of Euro horror to grace the screen in a long time. Combining a classic gothic plot (a la **EYES WITHOUT A FACE**) with disco pop and served up with a dash of kinkiness, it's a must-see item for the discerning horror fan. Even gore hounds will lap up the blood and guts, and there's a treat for femme fatale fans everywhere with a brief appearance by Caroline Munroe and some hot poop from EuroVixen Brigitte Lahaie - Yowza!

But what's Franco up to today?

Since directing **FACELESS**, Franco has written and directed several low-budget war and action movies that have not been widely released. It may come as some surprise to discover that over the years he's worked on a variety of projects with Orson Welles - and in fact most Franco films are an homage to the larger-than-life Orson; many imitate the structure, style and on-the-spot creativity of the maverick American. So it seems entirely logical that Franco should have been the guy to do the finishing touches and editing on Orson's last work, **DON QUIXOTE**.

The Franco edit of this long term project was premiered at the 1992 Cannes Film festival, where it was very well received. As to what the future might hold for this hard-working Spanish cineaste, who really knows? Let's just hope that he keeps to the spirit of Don Quixote and continues to tilt at strange cinematic windmills for a long time to come...

(Cathal Tohill and Pete Tombs are the authors of the forth coming **IMMORAL TALES: THE DEFINITIVE HISTORY OF THE EUROPEAN SEX AND HORROR FILM**, to be published by Nemesis Books, September 1993)



# JESUS FRANCO FILMOGRAPHY

Constructing a comprehensive Franco filmography presents a great many problems because of the various pseudonyms he has employed over the years and the fact that many of his films exist in a number of versions. Having said that, this is probably the most complete list of Franco's work yet published, and takes into account some 146 movies. If you have information about Franco movies we have missed out, then we'd be grateful to hear from you.

1957: ARBOL DE ESPANA (WE ARE 18).

1958: L'EXIL DU CID.

1959: TENEMOS DIECIOCHO ANOS

1960: OPERATION LEVRES ROUGES; LA BELLE DE TABARIN.

1961: THE AWFUL DR. ORLOFF.

1962: 077 OPERATION SEXY; VAMPIRESSA 1930.

1963: RIFI EN LA CIUDAD; THE SADISTIC BARON VON KLAUS (HAND OF A DEAD MAN); THE JAGUAR.

1964: DR. ORLOFF'S MONSTER.

1965: DIABOLICAL DR. Z.

1966: FALSTAFF (director of second unit); ATTACK OF THE ROBOTS; SCHOOL FOR SPIES.

1967: LUCKY, THE INSCRUTABLE; SADISTEROTICA; KISS ME MONSTER; SUCCUBUS (aka NECRONOMICON).

1968: CASTLE OF FU MANCHU; BLOOD OF FU MANCHU (aka KISS AND KILL, AGAINST ALL ODDS); MILLION EYES OF SUMURU; 99 WOMEN; JUSTINE.

1969: THAT GIRL FROM RIO (Aka RIO 70); VENUS IN FURS (Aka BLACK ANGEL or DE SADE 70); NIGHT OF THE BLOOD MONSTER; COUNT DRACULA; IL TRON DI FUOCO; X312 - FLIGHT TO HELL; FIERNO TUYA ES LA VICTORIA.

1970: VAMPYROS LESBOS;

EUGENIE: THE STORY OF HER JOURNEY INTO PERVERSION; DEATH CAME FROM AKASAWA; EL DOCTOR MABUSE; EYES OF THE NIGHT; SEX CHARADE; MRS. HYDE; DER TODESRACHER VON SOHO.

1971: 3 FILLES NUES DANS L'ILE DE ROBINSON (ROBINSON CRUSOE AND HIS

THE DIABOLICAL DR. Z.



WILD SLAVES); VIRGIN AMONG THE LIVING DEAD; CHRISTINA; JUNG FRAUEN REPORT (VIRGIN REPORT).

1972: DRACULA, PRISONER OF FRANKENSTEIN; LA FILLE DE DRACULA (DAUGHTER OF DRACULA); THE EROTIC EXPERIENCES OF FRANKENSTEIN; THE DEMONS; UN CAPITAINE DE QUINZE ANS; THE HOUSE OF VICE; INTIMATE DIARY OF A NYMPHOMANIAC; EL MISTIRIO DEL CASTILLO ROJO; UN SILENCIO DE TOMBA.

1973: THE SINISTER EYES OF DR. ORLOFF; RELAX BABY; PLEASURE FOR THREE; THE PERVERSE COUNT-ESS; THE OBSCENE MIRROR; LES AMAZONES DE LA LUXURE; THE EROTIC EXPLOITS OF MACISTE IN ATLANTIS (MACISTE VS THE AMAZON QUEEN); NIGHT OF THE ASSASSINS (Aka SUSPIRI); LE CHEMIN SOLITAIRE (THE LONELY PATH); SEXY BLUES; SOLITARY PLEASURES; EROTIKILL (aka THE LOVES OF IRINA).

1974: SEXORCISM; CELESTINE, BONNE A TOUT FAIRE; LORNA, THE EXORCIST; LES CHATOUILLEUSES; L'HOMME LE PLUS SEXY DU MONDE; LES EMMERDEUSES.

1975: DE SADE'S JULIETTE; SHINING SEX; MIDNIGHT PARTY; FRAUENGEFANGNIS (BARBED WIRE DOLLS - UK title: CAGED WOMEN); DOWN TOWN; LEVRES ROUGES ET BOTTES NOIRE.

1976: JACK THE RIPPER; DIRTY DRACULA (aka EJACULATIONS or THE PORTRAIT OF DORIANA GREY); LOVE LETTER OF A PORTUGUESE NUN; LA COCOLONA; EL TESORO DE LA DIOSA BLANCA.

1977: GRETA, THE MAD BUTCHER; DAS FRAUENHAUS; FRAUEN OHNE UNSCHULD; THE WOMEN OF CELL BLOCK 9; CABARET OF WICKED WOMEN; WOMEN BEHIND BARS; DIE SKLAVINNEN; CAMP EROTIQUE;

PASSIONS ET VOLUPTES VADOUES; THE SATANIC SISTERS (Aka SEXY SISTERS); RUF DE BLONDEN GOTTIN. 1978: COCKTAIL SPECIAL; ELLES FONT TOUT; JE BRULE DE PARTOUT; EROTIC SYMPHONY.

1979: LE CORPSET LA FOUET; SOLA ANTE EL TERROR; LES BOURGEOISES ET L'AMOUR; SADOMANIA; BLOODY MOON; LINDA; GEFANGENE FRAUEN (ISLAND WOMEN); DE SADE 2000; ORGY OF THE NYMPHOMANIACS; LAS CHICAS DE COPACABANA; SEXUAL ABBERATIONS; LA CHICA DE LAS BRAGAS TRANSPARENTES (PICK UP GIRLS); EL SEXO ESTA LOGO; EL LAGO DE LAS VERGINES; THE TOMB OF THE LIVING DEAD; WHITE CANNIBAL QUEEN (UK title: THE CANNIBALS).

1980: LADY PORNO; REVENGE IN THE HOUSE OF USHER; DEMONIC; BOTAS NEGRAS; LATIGO DE CUERO (BLACKBOOTS, LEATHER WHIP); INTIMATE CONFESSIONS OF AN EXHIBITIONIST; EL HOTEL DE LOS LIGUES; THE STORY OF O; LA CASA DE LAS MUJERES PERDIDAS (THE HOUSE OF FALLEN WOMEN); THE HOUSE OF THE LIVING DEAD; GERMIDO DE PLACER; HELLHOLE WOMEN.

1981: LA NOCHE DE LOS SEXOS ABIERTOS; THE BLASPHEMOUS ORGIES OF EMMANUELLE; MACUMBA SEXUAL; DEVIL HUNTER; A MILLION NIGHTLY TRYSTS.

1982: OASIS OF THE ZOMBIES; ALONE AGAINST THE TERROR; MOANS OF PLEASURE.

1983: SANGRE EN LOS ZAPATOS (BLOOD ON MY SHOES); THE MONSTERS OF FISK MANOR; THE TREASURE OF THE WHITE GODDESS; EL CAMINO SOLITARIO (THE ONLY PATH).

1984: TRIP TO BANGKOK - COFFIN INCLUDED.

1985: SIDA, LA PESTE DEL SIGLO XX (AIDS - THE PLAGUE OF THE 20TH CENTURY).

1986: ANGEL OF DEATH; EL OJETE DE LULU (LULU'S DARK CIRCLES); EL CHUPETE DE LULU (LULU'S LOLLIPOP).

1987: DARK MISSION; ESMERELDA BAY.

1988: FACELESS.

1992: DON QUIXOTE

FRANCO  
Filmography compiled by Allan Bryce.



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# The Dark Side

## COMPETITION CRYPT

*It's gory giveaway time again, and this month brings another typically generous grab-bag of ghoulish goodies guaranteed to make you the most popular guy (or gal) in the graveyard. All tapes are VHS (that's Very Horrifying and Scary), so don't come crying to us when your hair goes white watching them! Right, pin back those lupine lugholes and away we go...*



*Firstly, we had such a great response to last month's DOPPELGANGER competition that we decided to give all you Drew Barrymore fetishists out there another bite of the cherry, so to speak! Drew is hotter than the Ed's car in POISON IVY, which is a nifty little psychological chiller that has ET's little girl playing a grown-up and very sexy young murderess. It's out now from Guild Home Video and we have ten copies to creep round you with. (creeping Ivy, geddit?)*

*Next, we know that quite a few (thousand) of our readers are Dario Argento fans, and therefore won't want to miss out on immersing themselves in DARIO ARGENTO: MASTER OF HORROR, the brilliant new documentary that is being released on MIA Video this month. Okay, so it's only just over a tenner to buy, but let's face it, that tenner would be just as well spent on a six month subscription to THE DARK SIDE, which we trust you will take out if you are lucky enough to win one of the ten copies we have to give away...*



*Finally, while we're all waiting for Spielberg's upcoming adaptation of Michael Crichton's best-selling JURASSIC PARK, why not check out a golden oldie from the same author? Directed by Mike (GET CARTER) Hodges, the 1974 sci-fi movie of Crichton's THE TERMINAL MAN is being released in hi-fi and widescreen as part of Tartan Video's "Director's Collection." George Segal stars as the scientist who is turned into a psychotic killer when a computer implanted in his brain malfunctions. It's a great movie, and we have a cache of ten copies for you to take a byte out of...*

The choice is yours as to how you enter our creepy competition. You can either call in on our hellish British Terrorcom hotline (0898-345997) and answer five fairly difficult questions about recent horror releases, in which case your name will go forward for inclusion in our prize draw selection. Or you can send a ghostcard to our editorial address with a corny caption for the hair-raising picture on the right that will make us die laughing. Prizes will be split 50/50 between each entry method, and the Ed's decision is both laughable and final. Good luck!



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# FROM GODARD TO GORE



**Pete Tombs chews the fat with Franco favourite Howard Vernon, who is not anywhere near as awful as his famed Dr. Orloff in real life...**

**H**oward Vernon is one of the hidden treasures of European cinema. In a film career spanning 45 years he has worked with many of the greats - and the not-so-greats - of world cinema: Richard Widmark, Brigitte Bardot, Burt Lancaster, Michael Powell, Jean-Luc Godard, Fritz Lang, Paul Naschy, Walerian Borowczyk, Yul Brynner ... and above all, Jess Franco. Nowadays he often works with young directors, and his cameo in the cult hit *DELICATESSEN* was one of its highlights. Vernon was born in Switzerland in 1914 and grew up in America, following his father into the hotel business during the pre-war years. As an important hotel manager, he was rich

enough to own his own airplane. But bored with the life, he decided to become an actor, and eventually ended up in Paris where he earned his living on the stage as a singer and dancer in the famous Casino de Paris, working at one time with Josephine Baker.

His first film role was in 1945, and in 1947 he was one of the stars of Jean Pierre Melville's *LE SILENCE DE LA MER* - one of the greatest post-war French films. He first worked with Jess Franco in *THE AWFUL DR. ORLOFF*, in 1961, and went on to star in over 30 films for Franco.

Howard Vernon's rich voice, his fascinating face, his whole manner mark him out as one of the rare survivors of the old days of Expressionist cinema where the image - the



look - is everything. Howard Vernon is class. In a cinematic universe where mediocrity rules he will always be, as Jeanne Moreau said of Orson Welles, "a king without a country"

We met Howard Vernon in September last year, in a restaurant near his Paris flat, and for the next six hours were treated to a tour-de-force that ranged far and wide over his astonishing life and career. What follows is only the briefest of extracts:

should have made, but that's his own - I won't say fault - his own... will. He doesn't appreciate having someone over him, giving him orders and making decisions. And so he became



his own producer. He slipped down - not artistically, but in the industry - down to erotic films. Now, I am told, he makes porno.

DS: In Spain in the '80s, he did.

HV: But I can hardly blame him for that, because I'm the same. I never did the things I should have done to become the great star. I could have, but I just didn't want to. There's life too, you know. I remember once when I made a film in Hong Kong (in 1956). I didn't tell anyone where I was. After the film ended I went to Cambodia, to the Angkor temples, and I went to Thailand - it was before these

**DARK SIDE:** Can you remember how you first met Franco? What was your impression of him?

**HOWARD VERNON:** I met him here, in Paris, in a hotel. There was a producer I knew Marius Lesoeur, who said, "I want you to meet this young director. I'm co-producing his picture." I liked him from the beginning, and that film, *THE AWFUL DR. ORLOFF*, has become a sort of horror classic. It's shown on TV in America now at 4am, for... for truck drivers

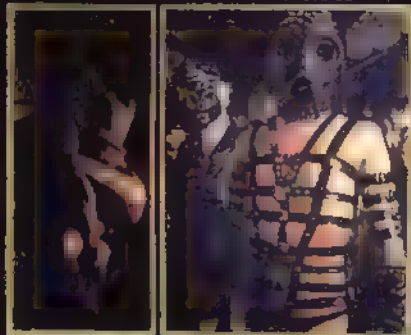
DS: Has your opinion of him changed over the years?

HV: No, no. Not at all. I admire him as a film-maker and I like him as a friend. He's terribly intelligent. He taught me many things about his country. A very cultured man. Really. He didn't always make the films he





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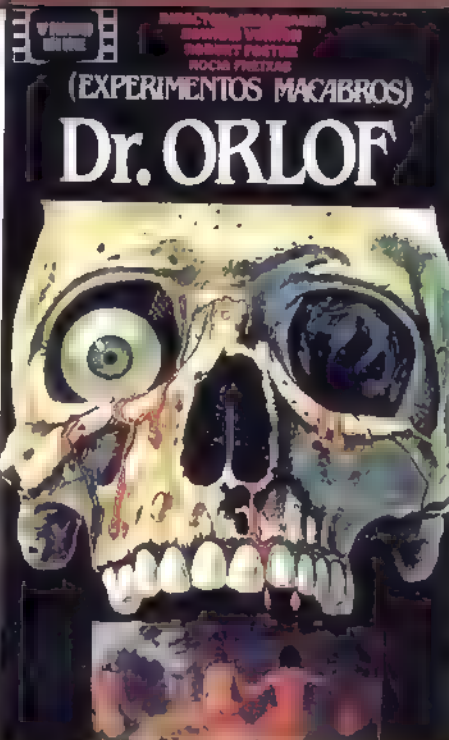
El joven Dr. Orloff, hijo del famoso hitleriano, ha sido acusado a causa de que su madre, a quien nadie, se había dado cuenta antes de su estado de mente, debido a un accidente del que Orloff es el culpable.  
Demandando valores: este video, es!

# Dr. ORLOF



(EXPERIMENTOS MACABROS)  
Dr. ORLOF

VHS



DS: He makes his films very quickly sometimes.

HV: Yes. One time we were in Madeira, and two members of the crew took a boat to the Canary Islands to get some drugs - dope. And Franco said to me, I don't understand why they need something to stimulate their imagination. I need something to calm down my ideas.

DS: Do you watch your own films?

HV: Sometimes. But usually I don't like to see myself. Sometimes I see them if there is dubbing to be done.

DS: We heard you dubbed Laurel and Hardy.

HV: Yes, that's true. Into French.

I did the fat one, Hardy. That was in the '40s, after 45 anyway. They didn't like the French actor who did it. But I was too thin! So they

sex tours that exist now. And I came back after three months and my agent was furious. He said, "I had two films for you! Good money!" I said that money couldn't buy what I have lived through in Cambodia, in the temples, without tourists. To live my life was something very important to me.

DS: The last film you made with Franco was FACELESS in 1987?

HV: Yes, that's right. And there was an ORLOFF in there too. But they wanted someone young. Well, that's natural. But they made a friendly gesture to our former collaborations, Franco and myself, and I had that one scene. I went to see him and asked, "How are you?," and he said to me: "Twenty people around the camera, I don't like it!" You see, his units were always small. Sometimes he carried the camera himself, instead of having to explain to people: "and now you

frame this so, and then, so." Instead of explaining all that, he does it himself.

I like that way of working; it's more handicraft than industry. We understand each other, Franco and me. My feelings for him haven't changed at all. I'm terribly sorry I don't see him any more, because I still have a great friendly feeling for him and I hope it's the same with him. But it's just not his style to go out of his way to see someone.

DS: He's always moving on to the next project.

HV: Yes. You know, he was born with a camera in his hands. I always say that if Franco had lived in the 16th century, then the brothers Lumiere, who invented the cinema, would also have lived then - because it's unthinkable that Franco would not have been a film-maker.

played around with the sound; I did it twice, I believe. It was fun. But I hate the principle of dubbing, it's horrible - to steal someone's voice like that.







**DS:** How did Franco get on with Orson Welles?

**HV:** Very well. They were great friends.

**DS:** They used to go out eating and drinking together?

**HV:** Franco doesn't drink. Well, he drinks wine. But he doesn't get drunk, he's not a drunkard.

**DS:** You were in a film with Orson Welles...

**HV:** Oh - *SI VERSAILLES M'ETAIT CONTE*. But I didn't meet him - everybody was in that film. I was also in an early film with Brigitte Bardot, the one she doesn't want to talk about, *MANINA, LA FILLE SANS VOILES*. That was her second film. Then she got involved with Vadim, and he remade her - it was like *Pygmalion*. But she was a nice kid, and now she has become a very intelligent woman. Such a lot of old stars, they cling on. But she dropped everything, withdrew completely from the movies.

**DS:** Do you remember much about *WHAT'S NEW PUSSYCAT*?

**HV:** Oh, yes - with that wonderful Peter O'Toole! What a guy! One day he was so tired, and I said, "Couldn't you sleep?" And he said, "Oh, no, I got drunk!" He got drunk until, I don't know, 4 o'clock in the morning, then had a steam bath and a cold shower, and was off to the studio. I couldn't do that. I got on well with Woody Allen as well, and he asked me to work with him again in *LOVE AND DEATH*.

**DS:** What do you think of the problems he's having now?

**HV:** Well, it's the media, they blow it all up. It's just a story to them. But it's a bloody shame. I hope it doesn't damage him or his career, but you know the Americans. With their stupid hypocritical morality, anything is possible.

**DS:** You worked with Paul Naschy...

**HV:** We made one film, *THE HOWL OF THE DEVIL*. It could have been good, a nice girl in it, Caroline Munro. But it was being done in English. Naschy said, "If we want to

sell it to the English speaking market it has to be in English," so all the other actors were dubbed. And he had the lead in it as well as directing. We were all going, "blah, blah, blah... unos, dos, tres..." and so on. Naschy said it would be all right when it was dubbed into English, but it was undubbable! Still, the story was interesting enough; and he was adorable. A very nice guy. I liked him a lot.

**DS:** You worked with Godard in *ALPHAVILLE*. Did you enjoy that experience?

**HV:** Well, one day I was in the Latin Quarter and a young student came up to me: "Oh, Mr. Howard Vernon! You made a picture with Godard, what is he like?" I asked him, "You know how they fish for trout? You step into the river with your hands, like so in the water, and you catch a trout. But most times it slips away through your fingers. Well, that's Godard. You can't catch him. You could live with him and still not know exactly who he was."

**DS:** And Borowczyk on *BLOODBATH OF DR. JEKYLL*?

**HV:** He's completely crazy, but very interesting. Temperamental. Unfortunately the picture didn't really come off. It wasn't finished. We were filming in a chateau, and only had permission to film up to a certain day - they needed the place for a big Christmas party. I was terribly sorry because I had such a good scene where I was performing an autopsy, and I was looking straight into a girl's vagina and saying, very precisely, things like: "The small lips have been injured horizontally. As to the large lips, only a scratch." I was looking forward to that!

**DS:** Do you remember a film of Franco's





called *LA COMTESSE PERVERSE*? It ends with two naked women hunting each other down with bows and arrows. At the end you say "This is the greatest moment of my life."

**HV:** You know, it's funny, but for so many heterosexuals - normal people, but after all, what's normal? - their great joy is being a voyeur, and seeing two lesbians together... So that remark somehow fits. Many Franco films have these scenes with two women. It's his personal taste, and it found an echo in many of his audience.

**DS:** Franco's very good at choosing the right actors for his films - particularly the women.

**HV:** Absolutely. One of my most important pictures was *LE SILENCE DE LA MER* - it was Jean-Pierre Melville's first picture, and my first lead. Before that I spent a month in Savoy, in the mountains in August, to concentrate on my role. I thought, well, I must do what great actors probably do and go through the script and the novel. In the morning I went to the lake and began to read the script. And then I thought, No, I'll do that tonight. Now I'm going to swim. And I swam in the lake. I spent a whole month like that. At night I prepared the script, but I didn't do a damn thing as far as study is concerned. But I lived with that chap. I slept with him. When I peed I thought, How would he hold his cock? In every situation I thought, How would he do this? I thought of all the sidelines, of everything that was NOT in the script. I just lived with him. And afterwards Melville never gave me any indications. His actor's directing was being done when he cast. If you put the right man in the right place you don't have to give all these so-called psychological explanations.



*Who's that smooth guy on the right?*

**DS:** Did you ever want to direct?

**HV:** Oh yes. But now when I see what young people have to do to be film directors I am not so sure. In my day a director used to just direct. Now you have to find the money and deal with the distributors and all that.

**DS:** You worked with Klaus Kinski once...

**HV:** We were in *JUSTINE* together, for dear Jess Franco, but we never met. Then one day I was in a shop here in Paris and going out through the door, and I saw him standing there. I said, "Mr. Kinski? We don't know each other, but we were in the same film together." He looked at me and said, "Really?" I explained it was a Franco film. "Franco?" he said. "Oh, that must have been a very long time ago."

It's funny, you know. There's a French film called *L'IMPORTANT C'EST D'AIMER* (directed by Zulawski). They made an English version - and I dubbed Klaus Kinski, because I spoke English with a German accent! But Kinski - he was not really an actor, more a sort of ham.

**DS:** What do you think makes an actor?

**HV:** Well, sometimes young actors come and ask the old man that I am, "What must you do to be a good actor - to be successful?" I say that there is no recipe. Except one. You must have a personality. Without that you are wasting your time.

*Howard Vernon has appeared in more than 135 films. Below is a list of his more important titles:*



1947 *Le Silence de la Mer*. 1949 *Black Jack*; *The Elusive Pimpernel*. 1952 *La Mome Vert de Gris*. 1954 *Napoleon*. 1955 *Bob le Flambeur*. 1960 *The Thousand Eyes of Dr. Mabuse*; *The Secret Ways*. 1961 *The Awful Dr. Orloff*. 1963 *The Train*. 1965 *Miss Muerte*, *Alphaville*, *What's New Pussycat?* 1966 *Night of the Generals*. 1967 *Necromicon*, *Mayerling*. 1968 *Justine*. 1969 *The Throne of Fire*. 1970 *Mrs. Hyde*. 1972 *The Erotic Rites of Frankenstein*. 1973 *La Comtesse Perverse*, *The Day of the Jackal*. 1974 *Seven Women for Satan*. 1980 *Bloodbath of Dr. Jekyll*, *Zombie Lake*. 1987 *Faceless*. 1991 *Delicatessen*.



# Dark Side horror classic

**B**ased on the successful stage play and Bram Stoker's classic novel, Universal's 1931 movie of DRACULA is faithful to the original play plot, and consequently somewhat staid in places. But it is nevertheless a classic of the horror genre, not the least because it introduced audiences to Hungarian-born Bela Lugosi, a performer who would become inextricably linked with the character ever afterwards.

The film opens in Transylvania, where Dwight Frye, a British estate agent arrives to arrange the sale of a deserted English manor

*"Alright, so the garden needs some work..."*

**The children of the night. What sweet music they make!" This month we get our teeth into Tod Browning's fantastic 1931 horror masterpiece, DRACULA...**



house to a strange nobleman, Count Dracula. By the time he arrives in the small village near Castle Dracula, the sun is setting behind pointed black mountains. An innkeeper cautions Frye about traveling through the dreaded Borgo Pass to see Dracula, but he manages to hire a nervous cabman to take him on the journey.

The increasingly apprehensive Frye is met by Dracula's coach and subsequently jostled in a mad ride over



*"Meet tonight's blind date contestants..."*

mountain roads until getting to the crumbling Castle Dracula. When alighting from the coach he discovers there is no driver at the reins. He enters to be greeted in an affable fashion by a man in a tuxedo, his hair slicked-back tight to his skull, his thin lips parted in a mirthless smile. It is 49-year-old Bela Lugosi, who was never more sinister than in the role that was to make him famous. Lugosi leads Frye up a huge staircase, passing through huge cobwebs without breaking them. He invites his guest to have a goblet of wine, but declines to join him, offering a wan smile and the immortal words, "I never drink wine."

Frye eventually becomes a victim of the 500-year-old vampire, but he is not drained of his life's blood. Instead he becomes

*"Try a bit of soap..."*







*"Bring me that estate agent!"*

Lugosi's slave and is forced to arrange for his master to be transported to England. During the voyage, Frye releases Dracula from his coffin and the bloodsucking Count ravages the ship. Arriving in England, only Frye is found alive - and totally mad, unless you consider an appetite for eating spiders and tiny insects normal!

Lugosi has jumped ship and taken up residence in a crumbling abbey. He stalks the streets of London by night, his first victim being an attractive flower-girl. Later, at the theatre, Dracula meets Mina Seward (Helen Chandler) and Lucy Weston (Frances Dade) and sets his fangs on both of them. Since their mansion is near to his lair, he visits them in various forms - mist, a wolf, a bat, and then his own, evil self, to drain them of their blood. Lucy is lost to the vampire, but before he can work his vile spell on Mina, Lugosi comes up against vampire-hunter Van Helsing (Edward Van Sloan), who he quickly recognises as a worthy opponent, noting "For one who has not lived even a single lifetime, you are a wise man, Van Helsing."

DRACULA was enormously popular when it was first released, and remains a classic of horror to this day, largely due to the eerie atmosphere created by horror expert Tod Browning and cinematographer Karl Freund (who was to go on to direct THE MUMMY and MAD LOVE). Universal was initially apprehensive about making the film and feared the public might reject it out of sheer disgust or horror. So its publicity department decided not to mention the horror theme, advertising it instead as, "The story of the strangest passion the world has ever known."

Lon Chaney Sr. was originally slated for the role of Dracula, but he died shortly before the film went into production and it

went to Lugosi - who had performed it on stage many times - instead. Studio heads felt that the film would do well abroad, so a Spanish-language version starring Carlos Villaria in the Dracula role and a completely new all-Spanish cast, directed by George Melford, was produced on the same sets only days after the English version was completed.

Further enhancing the strange, creepy atmosphere of Browning's film was the fact that it had no music (apart from odd snippets of Tchaikovsky's Swan Lake). Instead, all the audience hears (apart from the dialogue) are the spooky sound effects of creaking coffin lids and the howling of wolves. There is a somewhat stagy feel to the movie after Lugosi arrives in England, and that is be-

cause Browning, at this point, stayed very close to the play production. Many writers worked on the movie, including novelist Louis Bromfield (uncredited), before it went into a costly production. Ever frugal, Universal used stock footage from a silent movie for the scenes showing the sea voyage to England, and went on to cannibalise the impressive sets for later horror productions. An epilogue was originally shot in which Van Sloan addressed the audience with the sombre warning that "There ARE such things as vampires." But this was later cut and never restored.

In the end it is Lugosi who stays uppermost in the memory. Sure, he's corny and over-the-top, but he very definitely makes the role his own. The part of Dracula was umbilical to Lugosi. It was his first acting role on Broadway, and he knew very little English before he got the part, learning his lines with painful difficulty, speaking phonetically, giving him that peculiar speech where every word is drawn out, clutched by the hooks of his Hungarian tongue.

Lugosi's background is a little shady. He was born either in 1882 or 1884, and made his first stage appearance in ROMEO AND JULIET in Budapest after studying at the city's Academy of Theatrical Art. He served as a lieutenant in the Hungarian Army during WWI and was rumoured to have been involved in the revolution that swept his country in 1921 before migrating to the US, where he played romantic leads until being trapped by the role of Dracula.

In the mid-30s Lugosi had to endure his own personal horrors. He became a drug addict, spending his Hollywood fortune over the years on morphine, cocaine and heroin. In 1955 he went cold turkey, begging Los Angeles authorities to help him take the cure. But he died only three months after being released from an asylum. His final request was that he be buried in his Dracula cloak, and this was granted.

*"Oh no! It's the midnight flasher!"*





# Dark Visions

Who knows what terrors lurk deep in the heart of Horrorwood? Richard Marshall does, and he shares a few of them with you here...

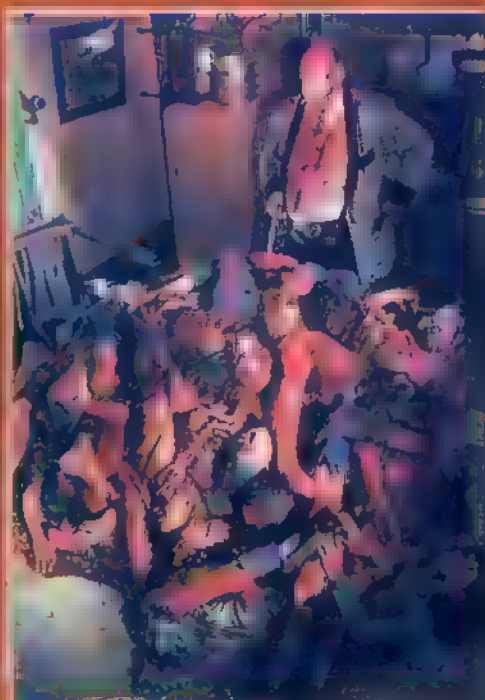
## BOOKS OF BLOOD

One of our favourite publishers of horror-related material is the American-based McFarland Books, who really deserve some kind of award for the incredible volumes of reference they produce. It's a shame that these are so expensive for British purchasers (and they aren't likely to get any cheaper with the current sorry state of the pound on the money markets). Luckily we get review copies for free (we're not ashamed to admit it) and this month our wallets breathed a sigh of relief as a trio of tomping new McFarland titles dropped through our letterbox. First there was **POVERTY ROW HORRORS!**, written by Todd Weaver, who is a familiar name for his many excellent Fango features on vintage horror folk. This splendidly entertaining volume investigates the Mono-

gram, PRC and Republic horror films of the forties, offering insightful reviews and fascinating background material on pictures like **VOODOO MAN** and **STRANGLER OF THE SWAMP**. Weaver also gives us complete filmographies of 35 poverty row stars like Wallace Ford and Charles Middleton. There's no doubt that he knows his stuff, and his book is well worth buying - even at £27.40. We wish we could say the same about the topical **CINEMATIC VAMPIRES**, by John L. Flynn, but sadly this slapdash history of the living dead on film and television is full of elementary errors (Have you ever seen Ken Russell's **LAIR OF THE WHITE WITCH**? Did you know that **THE MONSTER CLUB** was an effort to revive Hammer Films?) It's not worth wasting £34.00 on this when you can buy Steve Jones' **VAMPIRE GUIDE** for around a tenner. But to

finish on a high note, **THE FANTASTIC CINEMA SUBJECT GUIDE** by Bryan Senn and John Johnson is an awesome effort that most horror buffs will find incredibly useful for reference. The idea of the book is simple but brilliant. It lists some 2,500 horror, fantasy and science fiction pictures under separate subject headings. Thus if you want to check out werewolf movies, mummy movies, films featuring menacing cats or cannibals, giant Japanese monsters, or any other favoured topic

there are separate sub-sections, one for flesh-eaters and one for veggies!). It's as easy as falling off a log into a lagoon full of piranha. There's a fair amount of duplication in the entries, because many movies fall into a number of categories. But you've got to



After the party: **BRAINDEAD**

give the authors credit for a job well done. Each entry contains cast and chief credits, plus a neat synopsis of the movie. Critical ratings are also included in some cases, plus fascinating trivia on many obscurities. It's £38.25 to you, and like all McFarland books can be ordered direct from Shelving Ltd, 127 Sandgate Road, Folkestone, Kent CT20 2BL. Don't forget to tell 'em we sent you!

## ONE STEP BEYONDE

There's nothing comical about **FROM BEYONDE**, a horror comic book published quarterly by a small company that goes by the name of Studio Insidior. The brainchild of Mike Bliss and Frank Forte, this is one very sick creation indeed, and features enough sex and violence to give Mary Whitehouse





coronary! Taking its name from an H.P. Lovecraft story, the mag is liberally seasoned with EC-type scary stories about mad scientists, spilling intestines and grotesque genetic transformations. Of course it's not quite as easy to get hold of in the UK as THE BEANO or DANDY, but we're sure you'll be able to pick up all four issues so far published at your local Forbidden Planet branch. If not, you can write to the publishers direct at PO Box 124, Watertown CT 06795, USA.

## THANK GOD IT'S (THE LAST) FRIDAY!

4 years after the original FRIDAY THE 13TH made Camp Crystal Lake more famous than Butlins, along comes JASON GOES TO HELL: THE FINAL FRIDAY. So for the last time, it's "Good morning campers - yaaargggghh!" It seems likely that this really will be the celluloid swansong of the unstoppable hockey-masked horror with a mum who is just as bad, though if the movie makes a pile of money we wouldn't bet on it. 25-year-old director Adam Marcus was still in primary school when the first movie came out, but he promises, "We'll be giving Jason a much better ending than Freddy ever had!" It also seems that the producers are bucking recent horror trends and going for the gore. A few of the advance shots shown here make it into the final cut. The high body count this time out includes a guy being roasted to death on a

barbecue, faces being ripped off, bodies being split in half, and some pretty realistic shotgun wounds. The story takes place in the town of Crystal Lake rather than at the closed-down camp, and emphasises Jason's supernatural characteristics, painting him as an emissary of Satan who keeps coming back to life for the sole purpose of killing. "This movie is just JAWS," says Marcus. "Jason is the shark waiting to eat teenagers' legs off."

That's his only purpose." We'll be bringing you an extensive behind-the-scenes feature on this one shortly, including the extra special guest appearance at the end of an old favourite with striped jumper and long fingers.

## IT'S A DOG'S LIFE

Belgium is to horror movie production what Jim Bowen is to sophisticated humour, but all that could change with the arrival on the scene of MAN BITES DOG, the chilling black comedy from the young Belgian filmmaking team of Remy Belvaux, Benoit Poelvoorde and Andre Bonzel. Belvaux and Bonzel also star in the movie as a film crew who follow a psychopathic killer (Poelvoorde) as he murders numerous people and talks about his craft. Winner of awards at the Toronto, Tokyo and Sitges Film Festivals, the movie is the culmination of two years hard work for the team, who were



All pics on this page: more

students when they started. Seed money was provided by the Belgian government's film commission, who were so impressed by what they saw in the rushes that they put more funds in to blow up the movie from 16mm to 35mm for screening at Cannes. When it opened in Brussels the film got some unwanted publicity because a real psychokiller struck in the city at the same time. But he was quickly arrested and admitted that he hadn't got round to seeing the film. Silly chap didn't know what he missed.

## CELLULOID CLIPS

Peter Jackson's BRAINDEAD has been released in the States as DEAD/ALIVE. It has reportedly a minute of gore for its UK release through Polygram. MIDNIGHT SEX, DEATH AND VIDEOTAPE is John Russo's belated sequel

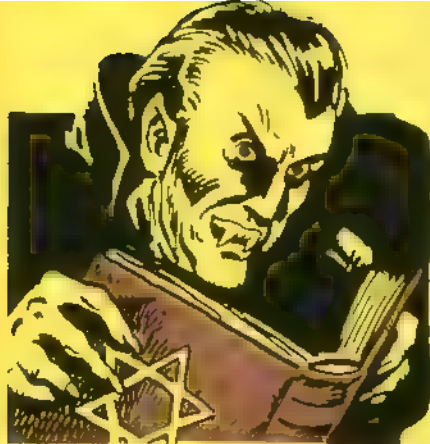


to his 1981 low-budget shocker. Just in case you missed it, the original had to do with a family of religious fanatics who slaughtered passing strangers in a misguided effort to cleanse the world of satanic influences. Mike Lee's VIPCO is gearing up for the release of a Schlock Classics series, including for some odd reason the martial arts thrillers WAY OF THE DRAGON 2 and THE BLACK BOSS. The company also plans

to reissue THE INCREDIBLE MELTING MAN (a film that deserves to run and run?), and produce their own comic book. Ah, but will it be the uncensored version? The story of legendary Scottish cannibal Sawney Bean has been brought to the screen in BLOOD CLAN, an obscure Canadian chiller which has managed to win several festival awards. The television movie of Stephen Gallagher's CHIMERA has been released in America as MONKEY BOY. Brian Yuzna has recently completed RETURN OF THE LIVING DEAD PART III. Columbia video are releasing two excellent-value double bills of the Ray Harryhausen favourites, FIRST MEN IN THE MOON/ EARTH VS THE FLYING SAUCERS and TWENTY MILLION MILES TO EARTH/ IT CAME FROM BENEATH THE SEA. Harryhausen received a long-overdue Lifetime Achievement Oscar last year. After SCANNERS 3 comes SCANNER COP, currently shooting in Los Angeles. After the excellent RESERVOIR DOGS, writer/director Quentin Tarantino is producing a vampire movie called 99 DAYS about a guy who is bitten by a bloodsucker and takes 99 days to transform.







# PRINTS OF DARKNESS

**C**ime writer Edgar Wallace's output was so high in the 1930s the catchphrase was, 'Have you seen the midday Wallace yet?' The equivalent these days is, 'Have you seen this week's Stephen King?'

King hasn't quite reached Wallace's level of prolificacy, although he does turn out books at an amazing rate. But there's an argument for King being more of a phenomenon than Wallace because the quality of his work is consistently so high. The problem is we've come to expect the miraculous from King, and when we get the 'merely' excellent it can seem a bit of a let-down.

His new novel, *DOLORES CLAIBORNE* (Hodder & Stoughton, hb, £14.99), is closer to its predecessor, *GERALD'S GAME*, than the supernatural shockers he is normally associated with. Like *GERALD'S GAME*, *DOLORES CLAIBORNE* is a single-person narrative, has an epilogue in the form of newspaper clippings and, again, contains no paranormal element. But in its way it's still a kind of horror story.

It takes place on Little Tall Island, off the coast of King's beloved Maine, and consists of a statement made to the police by sixty five year-old Dolores Claiborne. She was housekeeper and companion to rich

**Stephen King, Elvis Presley, Albert Einstein, H.P. Lovecraft and Stan Nicholls - spot the odd one out. Yes, it's Einstein, who never wore Blue Suede Shoes...**

widow Vera Donovan, who met a violent end by falling down a flight of stairs. Vera was an irascible old bitch - semi-demented, hallucinatory, unreasonably demanding - capable of driving a saint to breaking point, but Dolores swears she didn't kill her.

However, Dolores, who could give lessons in crankiness herself, does admit to another murder. Twenty-nine years before, infuriated by husband Joe's drunken antics, and revolted when he tried to get it on with their daughter, she did him in. Actually, it was a crime of omission, because Dolores could have saved the oaf from a life-threatening situation and didn't. Not that that made him any less dead.

As the plot unfolds we learn that working for Vera Donovan was as much purgatory for Dolores as life with her wretched husband had been. The old woman, sliding in and out of senility, was a maddening pedant. And in common with most fussbudgets her obsessions were petty, like using binoculars to make sure Dolores hung the washing with six, not four, pegs. (But if you read accounts of the average domestic murder you'll know it's the accumulation of small grievances that has people reaching for the bread knife.)

Vera had her ditso episodes, too. She was convinced 'wires' were coming out of the walls to get her, and had a dread of those under-bed balls of fluff Americans call dust bunnies. Why she should have these fears, and why in fact she should have left the comforts of mainland life to die on the island, are among the things Dolores muses on in her monologue.

And one important way the monologue here differs from the one in *GERALD'S GAME* is Dolores' colloquialism. She speaks a dialect which, for example, substitutes 'idear' for idea, 'wa'ant' for wasn't and 'pitcher' for picture. Not every writer can get away with this kind of thing, and the danger is that it acts as a stumbling block.

But here it's well-realised, and once you get on the wavelength, soon taken for granted.

How is *DOLORES CLAIBORNE* a horror novel? In its meticulous observation of the mundane cruelties people daily inflict on each other, and the depiction of soured relationships. In its portrait of characters riven by deception, betrayal and paranoia.

As usual, King demonstrates his faultlessness as a writer; technically he is a master craftsman with a superb ear for dialogue, an innate sense of structure and a remarkable ability to make everything he writes compulsive. The downside of *DOLORES CLAIBORNE*, truth to tell, is the slightness of the plot. 'Wonderfully told nothing,' would be a harsh assessment. I prefer saying I wish he'd written it at short story length. At least he can't be accused of playing safe. There is a certain verve in having one character, and a not particularly sympathetic one at that, carrying a whole novel. And with dialect yet. There's no arguing that King brings it off on a writerly level, but the meagerness of plot brings it down, as I said, to 'just' excellent.

One last thought. The book has black and white line illustrations, uncredited, which are nicely done but so literal in what they show it's difficult to see what the add. Why have them?

It may be taking things a bit far to say HP Lovecraft's fiction, in comparison to King's latest offerings, is more representative of conventional horror. HPL was a one-off with a uniquely eccentric, baroque imagination, much imitated but rarely equalled, and his work was anything other than conventional.

It's a shame, then, that we currently have no publisher in this country offering the entire canon of his work in affordable editions. So step forward for a round of applause Creation Press, who have issued a collection of twenty-three of his most accomplished tales under the title *CRAWLING CHAOS - Selected Works, 1920-1935* (trade pb, £9.95), edited by the ubiquitous James Havoc.

All the entries will be familiar to the fans, but make a perfect entree for general readers wanting to know what all the fuss is about. And collecting the stories in this combination for the first time means there should be a flurry of interest among HPL collectors, at least, whose passion for edition-hoarding is almost legendary.

The quality of the stories is a given for anyone who has already encountered them, and its always pleasant, whenever returning to this particular writer's mythos, to discover it remains undated. This is probably because the stories existed in an anteroom off the





main body of fantastic literature in the first place and simply lack the wider referents which have consigned many of his contemporaries to academic status.

Of interest is a special introduction written by Colin Wilson, which is deficient only in being a little shorter than I would have liked. Lovecraft fits perfectly into Wilson's theory of the 'outsider', of course, and it may not be generally known that he was instrumental in bringing the works to wider attention in this country.

Back in 1959, he was loaned a copy of Arkham House's *THE OUTSIDER AND OTHER STORIES*. This led to Wilson's *THE STRENGTH TO DREAM* (1962), the first time anyone in England had written a mainstream book concerning Lovecraft, and it was important in fuelling the subsequent cult. Interestingly, Wilson's original assessment of HPL's work was not unreserved in its praise. He was hooked on the depth of imagination displayed but thought the execution overblown and florid.

He modified this view when he later corresponded with HPL champion, and Arkham's founder, August Derleth. This led to Wilson's Lovecraft-inspired novel *THE MIND PARASITES* (1967) which, unlike most of his mentor's work, has ironically never been out of print.

'There is no point in denying that most of Lovecraft's work sprang out of deficiency needs,' Wilson states, 'and for that reason, has a narrow and suffocating quality.' But that's part of its appeal, and Lovecraft was, he concludes, a man of genius. That genius is amply demonstrated in this thoughtful selection. Given the sparsity of HPL titles available at the moment, its appearance is timely.

Just to prove, if proof was needed, that horror is a broad church, a quick word about Thomas M Disch's *THE M.D.* (Grafton, pb, £5.99). Quick because the novel appeared here in hardback last year - we overlooked it that time - and we have other pressing business.

The central character is Billy Michaels who, as a child, had a visitation from prankster god Mercury in the guise of Santa Claus. This deity, Faust-like, grants Billy a power, the totem of which is the caduceus - the serpent-entwined cane which has stood as the physician's emblem since Ancient Greece. The choice of the caduceus, a symbol also associated with Mercury himself, is clever because the power turns

out to be a perversion of everything it stands for.

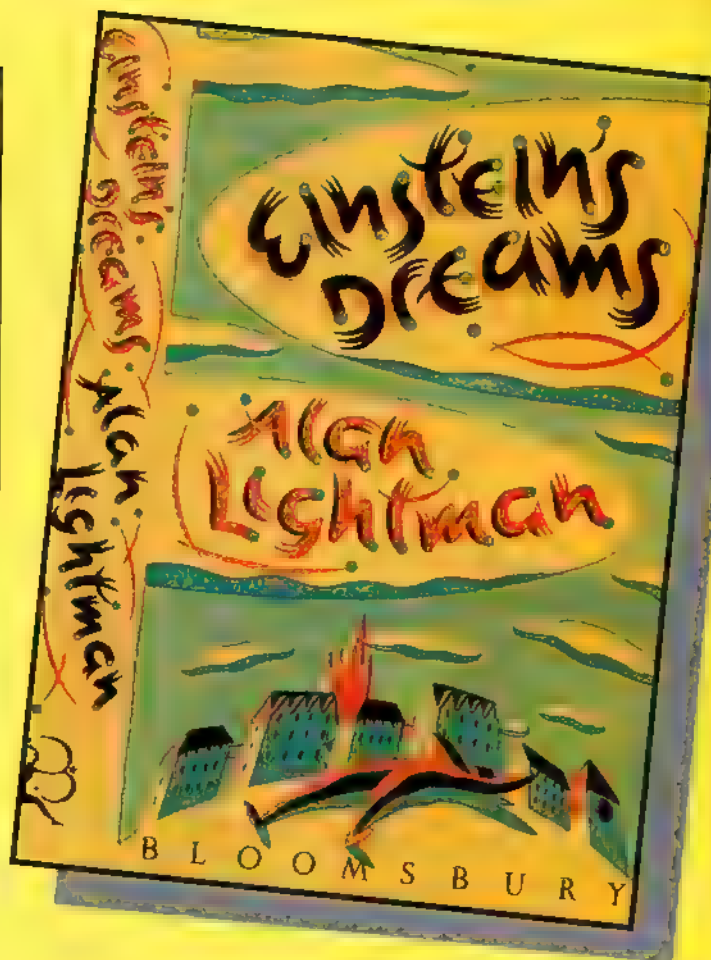
Mercury's 'gift' is no less than the power of life and death, a corrupting ability if ever there was one. As an adult - the M.D. of the title - Michaels uses it to further his status and career (and later even more ambitiously). This takes the form of the creation of a virulent disease only he can cure.

For once, at 541 pages, here is a novel which justifies its length, and has a pace belying the page-count. The characters are well-drawn and there is a wonderful internal logic that has you swallowing the increasing daffiness without protest. Above all, *THE M.D.* is a smart confounder of expectations; it always takes the least suspected turn. Disch is a considered writer with a fine track record in diverse genres, science fiction and young person's books principally, and with this one he shows a facility for occult horror to compare with the best of them.

*EINSTEIN'S DREAMS*, by Alan Lightman (Bloomsbury, hb, £11.99), had me thinking about what I knew of the great physicist beyond a bare understanding of his Theories. I dredged up two things. First, Einstein turned down a safe seat in the Israeli parliament, the Knesset, saying he found human problems a complete mystery. Second, and more intriguingly, I remember reading that his last words were never known. He had something important to say on his deathbed, it seems, and imparted it to his nurse in German. Unfortunately she didn't speak the language. Somebody should write a book about that.

Alan Lightman, a professor of physics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, obviously knows a lot more about Einstein, and in any event his first novel concentrates on the man's early life. It's also a novel which appears here, at the beginning of this month's sf quota, as a matter of convenience, because it would be misleading to call it science fiction. But it does address one of the genre's principal McGuffins - time.

*EINSTEIN'S DREAMS* tells of the scientist's ponderings, as a young man working as a patents clerk, on the nature of time. This in turn is really a vehicle for the larger question of creativity's part in science. How does the creative imagination, in this case in the hands of one of this century's undisputed intellectual giants, function? Where does this highly specialised mode



of thought come from? Lightman's approach is to speculate about the nature of Einstein's dreams, real and metaphorical, as a possible source of his ideas.

Along the way, the author conveys to a non-scientific readership, via the sugared pill of fiction, some understanding of the physicist's conception of time. And on the structural level the narrative plays with the paradox of time to tell its story. Over three months in 1908, we are told, Einstein had some thirty dreams which significantly contributed to the formation of his later work. These dreams are intercut with his daily life in Bern, and blend with them.

One of the arguments Lightman seems to be putting forward is that pure science and philosophy and more closely entwined than the average layman may have thought. It's a seductive idea, as is the notion that one of those thirty dreams, all about time, contained the truth of Relativity.

The structure is ambitious, the narrative not always easy to grasp first time around, despite the clarity of style. Einstein is the only named character, there is no 'story' in the accepted sense, and the chronology is almost surreal. But all that's just another way of saying this is the kind of book that requires an effort on the part of the reader, and that's healthy.

But don't get the impres-

sion this is some rarified literary exercise. Well, it is a sort of literary exercise, but not an inaccessible one. Despite the profundity of subject matter, and the potential pitfalls for the non-scientifically minded, the novel is not short on wit, humour and a deft exploration of human foibles. It isn't an easy read, but what's clever about Lightman's approach is that if you put aside your preconceptions about what literature's supposed to be, go with the flow and forget the standard conventions of narrative, the prize is some insight into the way physicists see the phenomenon of time. This may take several readings to appreciate, be warned, but the destination justifies the journey.

Jack Womack's *ELVISSEY* (Harper Collins, hb, £15.99) is worth the journey, too, albeit over terrain about as different from Lightman's as can be imagined.

Over the last few years Womack has turned out three books which, for want of a nearer classification, tend to be labelled cyberpunk. It isn't entirely the wrong way of looking at them, however, because he does present a hi-tech-lo-life future, uses all the usual cyberpunk trappings, and is as sassy as any of the 'pure' practitioners of the sub-genre. Difference is, he uses science fiction elements the cyberpunks usually shun, like time travel.

*ELVISSEY* opens in the



New York of 2033, and we have the by now familiar picture of unrestrained street violence, untrammelled corporate power and a proliferation of weird cults. (So far, so William Gibson.) One particular corporation, Dryco, is so contemptuous of the populace that its machinations help push significant numbers of people into the hands of a sect called the C of E. No, not our own state-sanctioned sky pilots academy; this C of E is the Church of Elvis. (Notice how often Presley turns up in science fiction novels these days?) The Church has schismatised, with offshoots bearing names like the Hosts of Memphis, the Shaken, and the C of E of Now or Never.

Dryco, realising the marketing potential of having the REAL Elvis on their payroll, despatch black heroine Iz down the timeline to 1955 to sign-up the man himself. Only trouble is that when Iz arrives at the Presley home, her skin artificially whitened to make her less conspicuous to mid-20th century rednecks, she finds the nineteen year-old in a spot of bother. It looks like he's just shot dead his mother.

I've enjoyed all of Womack's books to date, but this one most of all. It's very pacey, has lots of invention and, foremost, makes its future plausible.

One of the main ways this is achieved is by the use of language. In Iz's world they speak a hybrid of street jive, techno-talk and ethnicised American that reads absolutely authentic. There's an appealing strain of off the wall humour and an unflagging pace. Some nicely untelegraphed twists, too.

**THE EARTH IS THE LORD'S** - The Sunfall Trilogy, Book One - by William James (Orbit, pb, £5.99) is a paperback original, as is the trend these days, and the author's first outing. A broad-canvas sf adventure with faint echoes of DUNE (in the locale and density of its social hierarchy, and I do emphasise FAINT). THE EARTH IS THE LORD'S is a thoroughly decent example of the form, minor debut novel crudities aside.

Admiral Sergei Rostov, along with his son Alexei and small retinue, is stranded on the inhospitable planet Tarvaras after fleeing an assassination bid. The dominant race, the Yek, are a heavy duty warrior culture and, when Rostov realises he can't get off-world, he throws in his lot with their leader Kha-Khan.

Eventually, having been tutored in local customs by the warlord, the admiral and his party form an elite fighting force. As

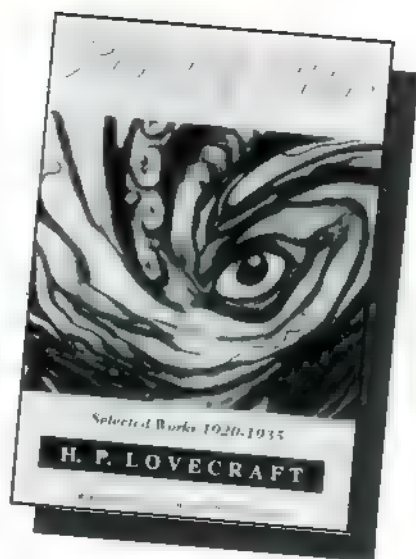
the Yek are about to launch an invasion against neighbouring peoples the Alan, action is not long in coming. A struggle to depose Kha-Khan forms the background. Speaking as someone not overly-fond of militaristic sf, I found this a palatable example of the genre, and was pleased to discover characterisations a cut above the norm in this kind of thing.

William James is a pseudonym, apparently, for a Glaswegian ex-soldier (which perhaps explains the authenticity of the action scenes), businessman and academic. He has degrees in science, law, English Literature and History. Who can he be?

Harper Collins have issued Volume One of ISAAC ASIMOV - THE COMPLETE STORIES (hb, £15.99) in a handsome door-stop of a tome that no doubt presages a flood of commemorative publications. There is inevitably some duplication with THE

ASIMOV CHRONICLES, another monster-sized collection Legend brought out in 1991, but not as much as you might think. And HC's edition has an, albeit brief, introduction by the man himself. If THE COMPLETE STORIES really is going to be complete, it will be an invaluable set, and a neat tribute to the late master.

Asimov. Now THERE'S someone who was prolific enough to make Edgar Wallace and Stephen King look like part-timers!



## SATANSKIN

James Havoc

ISBN 1 871592 10 0

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# SATANSKIN

"SATANSKIN is a remarkable collection of stories. The writing is black as hell, by turns violently obscene, repulsive, bizarre. No taboo goes unchallenged, no horror unexplored. It shouldn't be missed by anyone with an interest in the unusual." - OUTLOOK

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"Havoc's prose is a kind of evil manitou crossover between Nick Cave, Mervyn Peake and Iain Sinclair...there isn't a paragraph which doesn't contain some batches of flaming phraseology or some livid welt of brilliance. As a literary bestiary of gratuitous horrors, SATANSKIN is up there with 120 Days of Sodom." - DIVINITY

"The adventurousness of language, the compelling imagery, the uncompromising exploration of sexuality, all create a brilliant mosaic...SATANSKIN is an extraordinary and fascinating work in the truest sense." - JEREMY REED

"SATANSKIN is a journal conceived in madness and typed upon the hide of its victims." - HELLRAISER

"With SATANSKIN, (Havoc) effortlessly plunges the modern horror genre to its uttermost black extremes." - LOADED

## WELCOME TO HELL



# FANTASY BOOKSHELF

**K**ristine Kathryn Rushch's first novel, *THE WHITE MISTS OF POWER*, one of the titles which launched the Millennium imprint last year, was an impressive debut. Slightly over-familiar as far as it's plot was concerned, perhaps, it nevertheless scored in terms of superior writing and high class

**The world is on the brink of a final and cataclysmic conflict, and luckily Stan Nicholls is around to tell us all about it...**

characterisation. Of her new novel, *HEART READERS* (Millennium, hb £13.99; trade pb £7.99), there are no such reservations. This time, it all comes together.

Set in Leanda, a desert community at the centre of an empire, it's heroine, Stashie, makes her living as a heart reader. Heart reading is a rare magical power, of insight and far-seeing, but Stashie is content to ply her trade in a Leanda marketplace for modest reward. Having been brutally used by General Tarne, a man whose name is a byword for cruelty and ruthlessness, Stashie's only wish is to avoid the attentions of the military and remain unnoticed.

Pardue, the empire's ruler, is infamous for having killed his twin brother in order to secure the throne. He now has twin sons of his own. And he is dying. The question of which son will assume the mantle of leadership is his overriding concern, and he decides to resolve the problem by seeking advice from heart readers. He needs to discover which offspring has the purer heart, believing this will make for the best ruler. Then he can die knowing his realm is in good hands.

Stashie is reluctant to get involved. But she has a need for money, and to live in peace with her lover, so reluctantly agrees. The reading will be a straightforward matter, after all, the payment would alleviate her troubles and once the true heir has been determined the empire's future will be less fraught with peril. But simple tasks and good intentions have a way of going awry in the face of political in-fighting and the machinations of power hungry factions.

Rusch's style is sparse - no excess fat here - clean and compelling. She manages with apparent ease to engage us totally in the fate of her protagonist. Wise enough to know that in life, if not in the general run of fantasy fiction, people come in graduations of gray as opposed to stark black or white, her characters' motivations are entirely believable. Foremost, she has the knack of pushing the narrative along at a gal-

## HEART READERS



KRISTINE ♦ KATHRYN ♦ RUSCH



# MICKEY ZUCKER REICHERT

## RENSHAI



loping pace, touching the necessary information bases without pause for leaden data lectures. A fine example, in novel form, of the old Hollywood adage, "A good script needs three things: story, story, story."

There's plenty of story in *THE LAST OF THE RENSHAI* (Millennium, hb £14.99; trade pb £8.99), the first volume of a broad-canvas fantasy epic from Mickey Zucker Reichert. Ms Reichert (in case you were gender-confused by the name) has strong imaginative power too, although it must be said it's of a less deft and elegant order than Rusch's.

The background is a fairly standard sword and sorcery landscape: fractionalised realms on the brink of a final and cataclysmic conflict, a Great War heralding the local equivalent of Armageddon. Four immortal wizards have prevented this from happening for centuries past. Hero Rache Kallmirsson, whom we first meet at the age of twelve, is a member of Northern warrior race the Renshai. When his people's enemies combine to invade their homeland, only he survives the subsequent cull and enslavement. The plot then casts him in familiar avenger mode. And of course Fate has decreed that he should be the vital wild card in the coming Final

Battle.

The conventions and devices are far from new. But a saving grace is the clarity of the telling and a certain confidence in ignoring the clichés and getting on with the story. The book is too long, at 533 pages, and would have benefited from losing about twenty percent of it's bulk. But if you like the kind of fantasy that comes as sprawling great epics complete with maps, cast lists and diverse other appended information, you could probably do worse.

Millennium continues apace with it's ambitious library of the works of Michael Moorcock. "The Tale of the Eternal Champion" Volume Five - *SAILING TO UTOPIA* (hb £14.99; trade pb £7.99) - contains almost exclusively works he wrote in varying degrees of collaboration. "The Ice Schooner" is

the exception; the rest of the content is "The Black Corridor", "The Distant Suns" and "Flux".

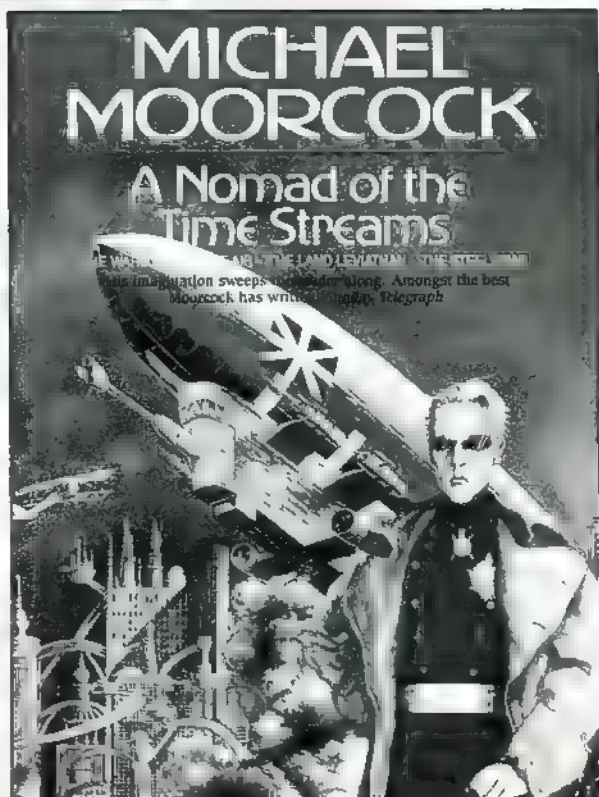
Volume Six - *A NOMAD OF THE TIME STREAMS* (hb £14.99; trade pb £10.99) - collects the novels featuring air ship commander Captain Oswald Bastable, set in an alternate mid-70's in which the British Empire is still going strong. We're talking about "The Warlord of the Air", "The Land Leviathan" and "The Steel Tsar."

These are authorised and complete editions (in many cases with revised texts) and, like the earlier additions to the series they look absolutely ravishing. If you like Moorcock, or indeed contemporary fantastic literature generally, you have to have them. No argument. Do it.

Gollancz also have a fine offering from Moorcock, now in paperback from the 1989 cased version - *CASABLANCA* (£4.99). This is a collection of fiction and non-fiction and includes six stories not previously published elsewhere. It also has the novella "Gold Diggers of 1977", a substantially revised version of the notorious "Great Rock 'n' Roll Swindle" of Sex Pistols infamy.

All the fiction is up to the usual standard, but I found the non-fiction pieces of particular interest. The "People" section, for example, contains absorbing portraits of Mervyn Peake, Harlan Ellison and others, while the segment entitled "Pornography and Politics" is a erudite gathering of five essays outlining Moorcock's feelings about and opposition to the more pernicious aspects of the skin trade. Characterised by reasoned argument rather than crude rant, his thoughts on the subject would give even a diehard libertarian pause for thought. A very nice compendium of the works of a remarkable and prolific writer whose concerns and talents extend quite a way beyond fantasy fiction.

Stephen Jones, although nowhere near as prolific as Moorcock yet, certainly seems to be carving a niche in the





world of non-fiction books about our favourite obsessions. His latest is **THE ILLUSTRATED VAMPIRE MOVIE GUIDE** (Titan, trade pb, illus., £9.99), which glitters like a thread of gold in the current avalanche of vampire tie-ins trailing in the wake of 'Coppola's less than satisfying movie version of DRACULA.

This is a thorough, workmanlike job, and try as I might, I can't find any major omissions in the book's eighty-year trawl of vampires in the movies and TV. Some of the entries (most, to be honest) could have been longer, but all the basic details are in place and the choice of accompanying stills is good. I've already found it useful as a first source reference and, so far, have only needed to move on to weightier tomes for the kind of esoteric information lack of space has excluded here.

A commendable effort then, recommended for its comprehensive spread and user-friendly tone. There's an affectionate and appropriately light-hearted introduction from Peter Cushing, in which he mentions that his paternal grandfather was a member of Henry Irving's touring company. And of course Irving employed Bram Stoker. As an afterthought,

Cushing adds that he banks with Coutts, as did Stoker - and Dracula! One of the pleasant things about the GUIDE is that there's plenty of this kind of esoterica packed in. In due course Jones will be hitting us with guides to DINOSAURS (around the time of Spielberg's JURASSIC PARK, no doubt) and MAD DOCTORS in the movies.

This connects with another manifestation of the current vampire industry - BRAMSTOKER'S DRACULA - The Graphic Novel (Titan, trade pb, £7.99), scripted by Roy Thomas, pencilled by Mike Mignola and inked by John Nyberg. The adaptation is fine, as one would expect from a comic book veteran like Thomas, but the art is somehow unengaging and lacking in real depth. This may well reflect similar deficiencies in the film it's based on, but the sadness is that this extremely competent crew couldn't come up with something a little less pedestrian.

And, alas, the one area the movie excels in - its eroticism - is almost completely absent, maybe because someone thought graphic novels are too near comic books and might corrupt the kiddies. So things don't go bonk in the night. Pity.

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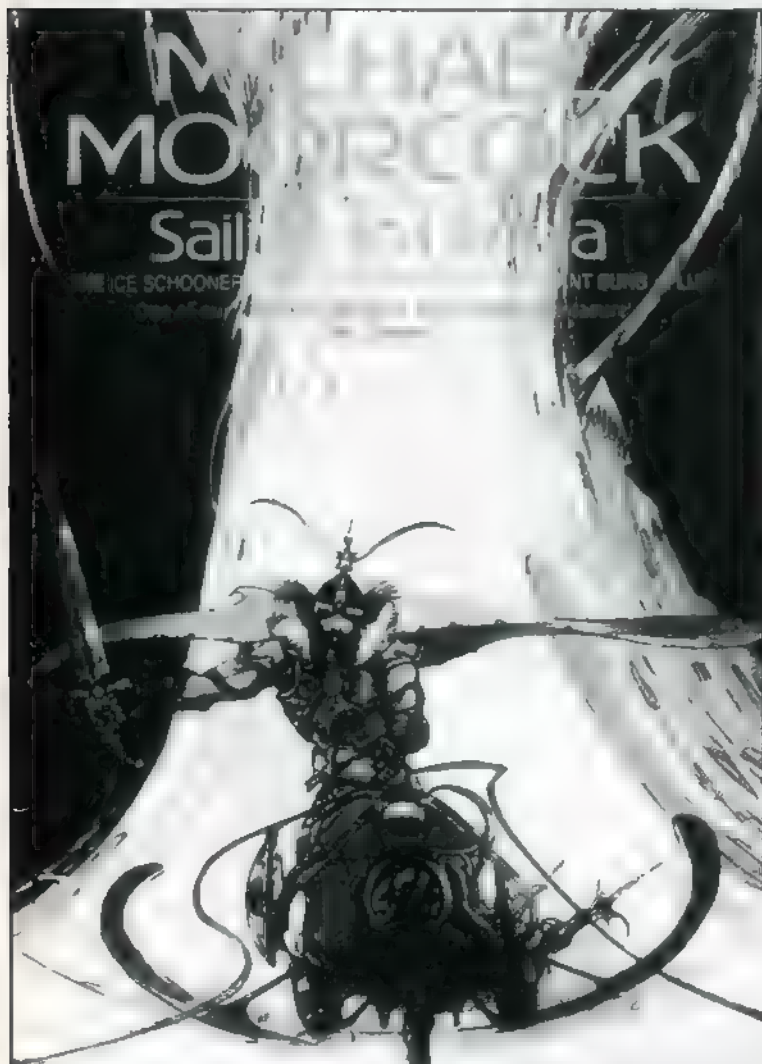
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**CB:** Yeah, I think there are some people who sort of say: "Why did you have to do that?" Yet I think that people who know the business of film-making even a little bit - I mean

Pinhead's back  
and this time he's brought some hell...  
for the final battle.

**CLIVE BARKER**  
presents

**HELLRAISER III**  
HELL ON EARTH

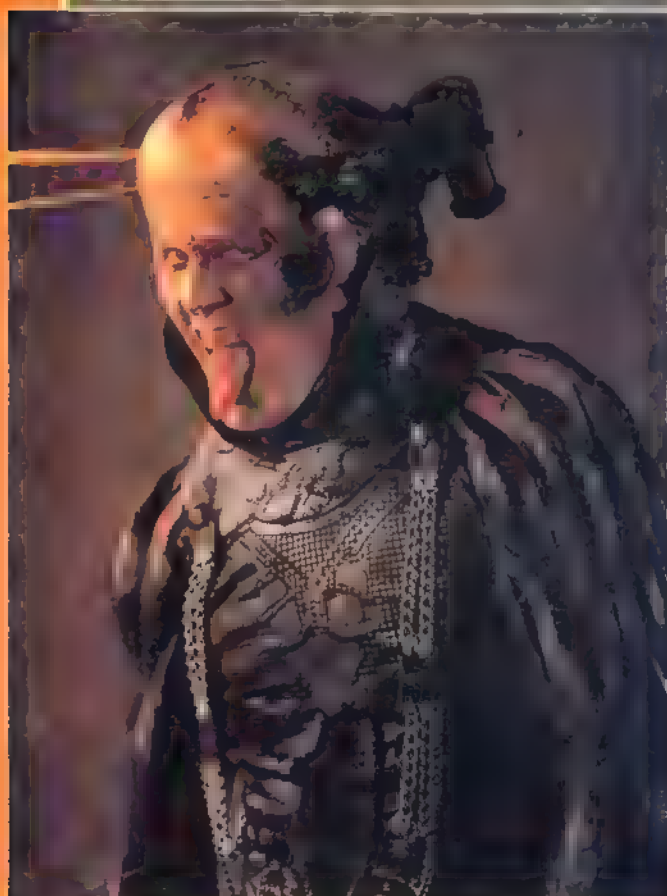


the people who read the magazines, the people who are aware of what's going on in the movie business - do understand that movies of the genres I'm interested in are not being made here. If they are, they're being made with a great deal more difficulty, and they are very often being made with overwhelmingly American backing. So it's very difficult for those people who maybe feel resentful about the move, not to understand that there are good solid reasons for my making it.

My interest has widened to take in all areas of popular culture which fascinate me. I don't make comic books and movies, or get involved in the making of comic books and movies, simply because there's lots of money in it, though of course there is that. I'm in it for love, because I've always loved comics. I've always loved movies, and I love the simplicity of the access that you have to your audience.

Corman pointed out to me during that TV programme, *THE HORROR CAFE* - that though critics sneer at horror movies, as the years go by, time is much crueler to the hit social commentary movie, the Oliver Stone movie, than it is to the science fiction movie, the horror fiction movie, because there is, you know, a kind of sense in which the world of the fantastic is a constant. *THE WIZARD OF OZ*, was not liked when it came out. It was loved by the audiences but not by the critics. But it has stood the test of time, because in a sense the world that it operates in is out of time. There's nothing worse than looking at movies that were incredibly hip in the 60s.

#### HELLRAISER III



#### HELLRAISER

DS: Or in the early 70s, which all these

and they become kitsch incredibly quickly. I

love the sense of this pool of popular images and ideas which come out of comics and movies. Then, at the other end, there's hopefully going to be an operative production of *WEAWEWORLD* - the other end of the cultural market, if you like, which is also fascinating, and I want to get involved in more of that as well. A lot of comic book titles are coming in. I've enjoyed a lot of the comic book work. I've enjoyed being involved with those people. They're a very different set of people. It's also a fast turn around kind of thing, you know? Movies take three years to get off the ground, a book takes a year and a half. Comics? (snaps fingers) You know they just happen overnight.

DS: You're very good at using this late-20th Century global multi-media network for your own purposes, and it occurs to me that by so doing, you've been able to attain a stature in the genre which is very unusual for somebody who's still alive.

mean, H.P. Lovecraft and Edgar Allan Poe were dead before anyone took any notice of them.

CB: Well obviously there's also Stephen King today. I mean, Steve doesn't have the same sort of passions, Steve isn't interested in comic books the way I am. I think the thing is that the time is right for the kind of cross-media pollination that I was talking about, and part of that is because popular art in the form of the comic book, for instance, has found a new legitimacy. Part of it is that there has always been a kind of condescension towards popular culture, and all you have to do is agree." I mean, that's all that it really takes.

DS: That's what the surrealists did. They revered popular culture above 'High Art'.

CB: Yeah. There's a wonderful book actually, published by City Lights, called *SURREALISM AND ITS POPULAR ACCOMPICES*, and it's just a collection of interesting and important essays. I mean, I think about the Bunny cartoons, certain kinds of theatre. Even on the London stage there is, in disguise, a lot of surrealism. I mean, whether you like it or not.

*PHANTOM OF THE OPERA* by Andrew Lloyd Webber is still *PHANTOM OF THE OPERA*, and it's a massively successful piece of musical theatre. Whether you admire the piece as a piece of musical theatre



which moves audiences nightly, wherever it's playing, is that Gaston Leroux story, rendered with great seriousness of intent. I mean, there are lots of things that I would prefer to be different in that show but none the less, there it is: It's moving people, it's touching people. And of course that show was treated with great condescension by the critics as well.

In a way it's great that there are many areas where all that is going on. But what I think we're missing is an overview, because the critics won't provide that. They feel too superior to do that. Academics are doing it in America but they're not doing it here, so the whole sense of the fantastique, the eruption of the fantastique, the incredible number of comics that are being produced and the areas that comics are moving into - the high-risk subject-matter as opposed to men in tights - there's nobody pulling that stuff together. There's nobody saying: "Instead of dividing the area of the fantastique up into our little cliques and areas of concern (the horror movie, the horror novel, or whatever), let's see what the overview actually means." I think if we'd look at it as an overview, we'd find that there was an extraordinary eruption of this. It's only because you say "OK, what is the horror movie doing," - well, if you start limiting yourself to "the horror movie" then you're missing the point.

**DS:** Presumably this is why you're being billed as a "master fabulist" rather than a "horror writer" these days.

**CB:** The term "fabulist" was first used about me by the New York Times, and I liked the word. I like the association. Fabulist means liar for one thing, which I like (laughs). It's better than a "fantasist," because fantasy is

associated in most people's minds with sword-and-sorcery which is not what I do. It's a pity it's that way, but it is.

"Horror writer" doesn't fit the bill any longer, though it seemed like a piece of vocabulary that was useful in the same way that I used the term "fantastique," as a means to mark out a whole territory of endeavour. The vocabulary has become, I think, an albatross around our necks. I think the term "horror novel" is a millstone, and we've got to find a new vocabulary, because as long as people use those kind of words, with them come a whole bunch of dumb associations. It plays into the hands of the hopelessly middle-of-the-road, empty-headed critics, you know, the Barry Normans or their literary equivalents - the people who represent the smug, complacent, middle-class end of the market. One of the reasons why I'm so voluble, and it gets me into a lot of trouble, is because I care to speak out about not just my own work, but this whole body of work, which seems to me to be so interesting and is so underrated.



Terri the Cenobite in *HELLRAISER III*

Clare Higgins enjoys some hammer horror ■ *HELLRAISER*



**DS:** As you spend more time in America, soaking up that experience and learning about the country, does it alter your conception of how the trilogy of books initiated with *THE GREAT AND SECRET SHOW* is going to develop, or is something like that too well mapped out in advance?

**CB:** Well, the second one is very well mapped out. The third one might yet develop. I know where the three books are going to end, but the first book came as a consequence of being in LA and seeing the small dormitory towns that LA has in the valley, and so it was a direct consequence of seeing certain places and realising, just getting to see what their life-styles were over there. So, yeah, the second book is fairly set. The third one, the adventure, who knows? I wanna do some more stuff set in LA, because LA is such an extraordinarily rich canvas of strangeness and grotesquery and excess. I would like very much to go back to that area for examination.

**DS:** Talking of changing one's attitude through experience, I gather that researching *IMAJIKA* totally changed your attitude towards the occult...

**CB:** Yeah! I have always been interested in the occult, but I've never really investigated it with any great seriousness. I certainly hadn't met, except by chance, magicians and occultists and practitioners. I made it my purpose to seek such people out for *IMAJIKA*, and met very articulate, bright, analytical



go back to this problem of vocabulary, was one of their worst enemies in a way...

contradiction in terms, the combination of magical and analytical...

CB: You're right. One thinks of them as being out of touch, but actually they're not. Their vocabulary as carelessly as Shirley Maclaine does, and it's not the case at all. One can't speak universally, because there are people who fall into that category and people who obviously don't, but maybe I just had the good fortune to meet a lot of bright, articulate people who were extremely insightful and realised the liabilities of their power, craft. But what really got me, really persuaded me, was the fact that their knowledge doesn't exist in some sort of vacuum. It has to be defined in terms that include Freud and Jung just as much as it did Blake, Coleridge, and so on. And as I say, I found the whole

Art. Good people!

DS: Speaking of Jung, I gather you keep a dream diary.

CB: Yeah.

DS: Jung eventually had to give it up, didn't he? Because he came to the conclusion that his dream-life was beginning to "swamp" his waking life?

CB: Making dreams invade my existence, so maybe I have a slightly different attitude. I was on IMAJKA, and I was also involved in... I stepped outside the house for about two hours! I would get up, go to my desk, work out, take some lunch, go back to my desk, eat dinner, go back to my desk, then go to sleep!



the book, and obviously when you're asleep you're within an imagined world as well. I had to face up to the fact that I had no life - it was all imagined! (Laughs)

I get into a kind of fugue state under those circumstances, and what happens is that the more that happens, the less I want to go out. The more internalised I become, the more I resent picking up



"Pass the Disprin": HELLRAISER III

the phone, the more bound by a fictional world I become. If I have to have a headache, I have to have someone else's. And I'm being in a situation where my enthusiasm for this becomes so thorough-going that I would lose my grip, and I know that there are danger signals in myself, in dreaming the novel that much.

I even had a thing where all the names in my novel, that I'd made up, I had someone come up to me in my dream and say no, I was wrong for me to pass them off as if I had invented them. I woke up, and I must have been aware that I was dreaming, because I came to the surface and then I got back to sleep, and the first thing I did when I got back to my desk, the first time I wrote one of the invented words, the dream broke and I came back to it. I dreamed that all this was real, but

thing very instructive. I also discovered that they have a passion for the kind of fiction that I have passion for, and that they take Lovecraft, Barker - very seriously. But not because they believe in the truth...

DS: Rather in the sense of allegorical truth?

CB: Yeah, exactly. That what it says about the relation between the conscious and the unconscious, between metaphor, symbol and reality, are valid and important things, and I think that's interesting. I had never realised that there was this meeting between the fictional worlds I create and the worlds that they believe in - whether one shares the belief or

#### HELLRAISER





it's fake. And that's a very interesting confusion - here my subconscious is trying to say to me: "This stuff is the real McCoy!"

DS: It's like something out of a Philip K. Dick novel.

CB: It is, absolutely. My subconscious was saying something extremely strange to me, a weird thing actually, and I don't get freaked by those things. It intrigues me as to why my subconscious is saying that.

DS: Robert Louis Stevenson had "brownies," dream imps that brought him ideas for stories. Do you have anything like that?

CB: No, mine try to stop me before I commit again (laughs). No, the ideas grow. I feel that the process is one of sowing seeds, over a period of years usually. I mean, in the case of *WEAVEWORLD*, years, in the case of *IMAJIKA*, years. Actually, in the case of *THE GREAT AND SECRET SHOW*, the idea of evolution (two creatures evolved by the same drug into opposite moral extremes and then having children), had been been with me for an incredibly long time. They stay in the system and they percolate. Some of them just never turn into anything, or they haven't so far. Again, dream diary keeping is often a way of telling myself how far an image is going, or where an idea is going. Dreams can tell me, indicate the level of sophistication an idea has got to. I find the business of analysing dreams not terribly useful. There are times when you can wake up and say: "Ah yes, that's what that was about." I still don't know what I just talked about, what my subconscious was trying to tell me, what it was trying to convince me of.

DS: It is at least a good idea for a story in itself.

CB: Yes, it's exactly what you said before, a Philip K. Dick idea, very strange.

DS: We talked before of the limiting nature of categories, and this brings me to the vexed question of "splatterpunk."

CB: (Grimaces) I think the fact is that for one thing, categories don't work. "cyberpunk" doesn't work, "splatterpunk" really doesn't work, because you can't thrust all of this stuff into a package and try and keep it there. I like John Skipp and Craig Spector a good deal, both as people and as talents. They don't influence me, and I don't believe that I influence them. I think all that's happened is that a certain liberation has been in the air, in the matter of representation. Cronenberg, in a different medium, uses that liberation as well, Wes Craven uses that liberation - although they're actually half a generation older than myself. I think the violence in what they do is very much a part of what they do. I think it's not actually

a huge part of what I do. The battle-lines between Good and Evil are much more strictly drawn in Skipp and Spector - the bad guys can pose as the good guys and get away with it for a while, but by the end of the story all that is sorted out, and the bad guys are vanquished, which isn't really of huge interest to me as a structure. I think Cronenberg was right when he was asked what the similarity between our work was, and he said we were both obsessed with transcendence. It's the problems of change from our present condition - "long live the New Flesh" - that fascinate both me and David. And one of the consequences of transcendence and change is that sometimes the little sack of flesh, which contains these volatile forces, splits and bleeds, and then you get a kind of splatterpunk, ~~in you get any kind of~~ splatterpunk.

There's a book which Paul Sammon edited, called just *SPLATTERPUNK*, which is a whole host of splatterpunk stories, and he called me up to see if he could have *MIDNIGHT MEAT TRAIN* for it, and I said "Sure, of course you can have it, I think it's my only splatterpunk story" (laughs). Actually, I think *RAWHEAD REX* is also a splatterpunk story, but really there aren't that many, I mean, I don't think something like *IN THE HILLS*, *THE CITIES* falls into that category at all.

The problem with any category is that ~~it's often a way to segment people's~~ imaginations, to define something as being

**HELLRAISER**  
THIS because it isn't THAT, and the fact is - and a lot of fans don't want to hear this, any more than writers and publishers do - that *THE LITTLE MERMAID* is closer to *THE TERMINATOR* than it is to *KRAMER VS. KRAMER*. That has to be said, because the world is not divided up into *DR WHO*/*STAR TREK*/*THE LITTLE MERMAID*/*TERMINATOR*. It's divided into the imaginative and the unimaginative, it's divided into people who celebrate the dream and the nightmare - and people who celebrate and cleave to reality as to the last plank of a sinking ship. I'm very fond of Herbert Read's remark on this. In an introduction to a book on surrealism, he said: "Reality is a bourgeois

prejudice."

DS: That's a very William Burroughs kind of a notion.

CB: Yes, Blake had the same thing as well. It's always about the fact that reality is a cheat, and if you cling to it, you're going to go down with the ship. It distresses me when I go to conventions and I hear so much in-fighting, and the enemy isn't the guy who likes *STAR TREK* when you don't, the enemy is the middle class boring critic, the enemy is Barry Norman. Now, what I hate about the hardcore-ists is their passionate dedication to excess, in terms of "Give me more blood!" When we had the *NIGHTBREED* screening, there was a guy who yelled at the screen about half-way through, "Where's the gore?" - and that sort of disappoints me. There was only one of them, thank God - because then it implies that they're only going there for one thing. It's like going to an erotic movie thinking that if you're not going to see cum shots, it's not worth going. Just as horror fiction isn't simply about gouging veins, eroticism isn't simply about cum shots, and if you think it is, then you're fixated, you've made a fetish of something.

Of course you're then missing a huge amount of stuff, and it's fetishising these symbols of a certain generic effect. It's two things there in the word "splatterpunk," it's





the idea of blood spattering and the idea of a "punk," which is street-wise, and it's rebellious and it's tattooed and it's, you-know (pulls face) it's not terribly interesting. Both you and I could write a short splatterpunk story that would be a parody of all that, and that would be the end of it. But then we would want to move on to something else, wouldn't we?

DS: But your literary work has been very graphic in the past, and because of that, some people are surprised that you aren't more opposed to censorship in the movies than you actually are.

CB: Yes, well, I think the fact is that you have to apply the reality principle, which says that there are people in our community who have anxieties, whether we think they're legitimate or not, which are consequences of their social background, their fears for their children, their religious up-bringing, and so on. I feel that it is hopeless to start out by saying that you will not listen to these people, because the moment you decide you're not going to listen to them, well, you've just taken opposite positions on either side of a ring, and you just hate each other. And what will happen is that they will win.

The only way, it seems to me, of softening the blow of this stately sense of propriety, is to understand where these people are coming from and meet them in well-thought-out, articulate debate. It's too easy to say: "You're wrong, you're oppressive bastards, you're fascists," because then they'll say: "You think that? Well, we've got the law on our side - fuck you, Charlie!" It's better to come into the middle of the ring and say: "OK, tell me, explain it to me," and then, when they explain, very often it comes down to the things which you can debate with them about. I've debated with censorship bodies several times now and I've very often lost, but I think I've won more often with the British Board of Film Classification, because those are

*Clive and less salubrious friends.*



*Clive and friend*

bright, articulate people, who don't respond well to being told that they're not bright and articulate. Part of the problem with the anti-censorship lobby is that if you stand at a distance and shout across a room that those individuals are sods and ignorant fascists, you'll get their backs up, and you are gonna

lose! Care and consideration are what is needed. It won't do to have a knee-jerk response.

DS: Something else that surprises people is the way that you seem very dismissive of **HELLRAISER** now, whereas many of us regard it as a classic.

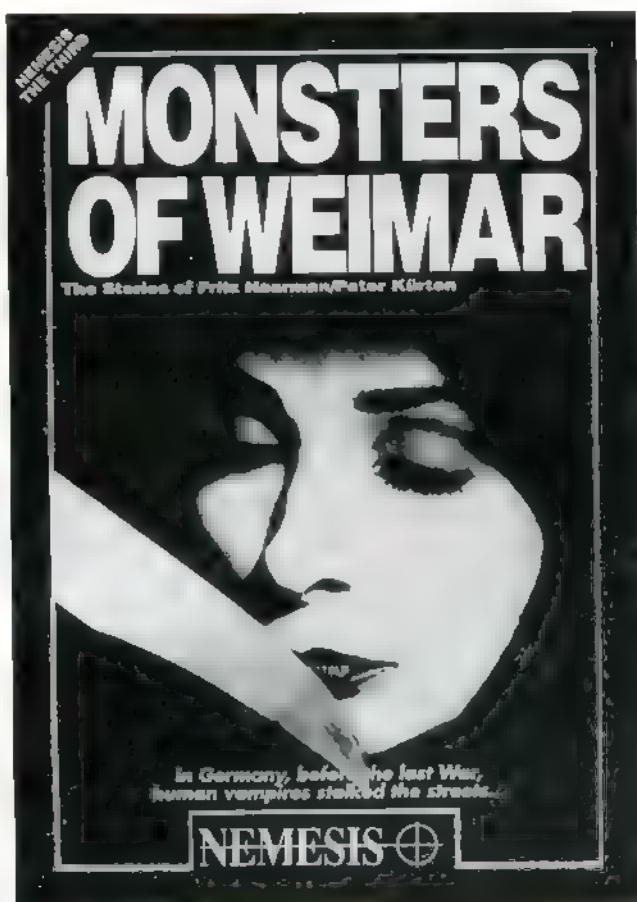
CB: (Laughs) I think everything I do is flawed!

You walk away from everything thinking: "Well, I fucked that one up at the end, didn't I?" I've learned to do that, to walk away from everything I do thinking I've failed, because that's one thing that gives you the energy to get on and try to do better, do something else. I don't think it hurts, y'know? Hopefully there will come a time when I'll be able to sit back, maybe when I'm 85 or something, and say: "Well, I didn't do too badly."

I've been published for seven years, made a couple of movies, neither of which I'm particularly happy with. I'm beginning, and there's always the sense that you must do it better, and maybe the moment at which you think you've done it best is the moment to say, y'know, leave it alone, go and be a sheep farmer or something. But the level of my ambition is to do it better and do it fresher and do it new and surprise myself. And the danger is - not all the time, of course - that you will disappoint people, because they always want you to be doing what you last did. But there is an audience, and a growing audience, for the idea of the wonderland of the imagination, and it's such a fucking big place. How can you not be disappointed if you only get to cover one valley in each book?







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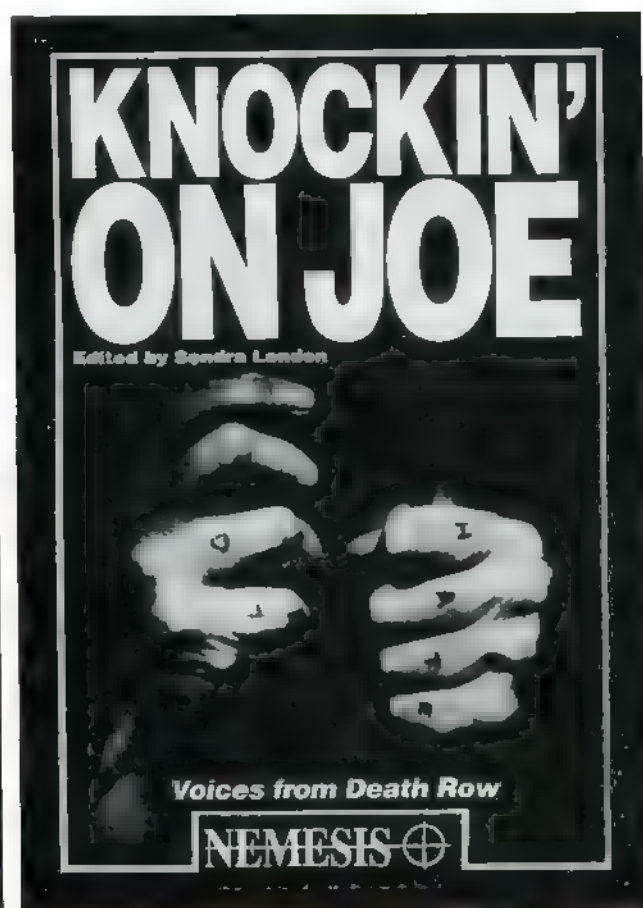
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(ISBN 1 897743 05 X - £6.99) -  
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# TERROR IN THE AISLES

**J**oe Dante made a name for himself by directing a series of effective, though tongue-in-cheek monster movies like *PIRANHA*, *THE HOWLING*, and *GREMLINS 1 & 2*. At first glance he seems to be abandoning the realm of horror with his latest effort, *MATINEE*, which is a coming-of-age story set in Key West, Florida during the Cuban Missile Crisis. But a closer look reveals that the film is actually an ode to that childhood sense of wonder which truly appreciates cinematic science-fiction.

Although the nominal lead in the movie is 15-year-old Gene (Simon Fenton), the real star is John Goodman as Gene's idol, shock impresario Lawrence Woolsey, who has arrived in town to premiere his newest epic: *Mant!* (Half man, half ant - all terror!). Furthermore, Dante shot a good portion of *Mant!* - in black and white of course - which appears as a film-within-a-film. Having shot the movie last year, Dante came to London for a flying visit to attend the music scoring sessions with his regular composer Jerry Goldsmith.

**DARK SIDE:** Why are you working in London on an American film?

**JOE DANTE:** Jerry Goldsmith likes to score over here. I was under the impression that he was using something like the London Symphony Orchestra - maybe they even call it that. But actually it seems to be a polyglot group of people who get together whenever there's a movie.

**DS:** Is *MATINEE* something you developed yourself?



**Roll up! Roll up! Roll up! And listen to Steve Biodrowski as he talks to director Joe Dante about his unusual new movie, *MATINEE*, a long-overdue tribute to legendary horror showman William Castle...**

**JD:** It's a project I've been trying to get made for four years. It started as a pitch from a writer named Jericho Stone, which was considerably different from what we ended up with. His version was set entirely in a movie theatre, with really young children, and it was something of a fantasy, with the kids imagining that the theatre employees were bigger than life. It changed quite a bit from that. Ed Naha did a draft, and then it was completed by Charlie Haas. Now it's about a horror director, somewhat like William Castle, who is taking his new horror picture for its preview in Key West, Florida, on the

weekend of the Cuban Missile Crisis.

**DS:** If you changed the story so much, what was it about the original idea that appealed to you?

**JD:** I guess the idea of doing a movie about Saturday matinees has always appealed to me. I was about the age of the kids in the picture during the Cuban Missile Crisis, so I remember that as being a really scary period. This movie contrasts the scariness of life with the scariness of

movies. It's a coming of age story. It's basically, I think, a light comedy, but it does have some serious aspects to it. I remember being fully convinced at the time that it was really going to be the end of the world that weekend. There was a real feeling of powerlessness, that events over which you had absolutely no control were now in force and were possibly going to be too much for the people running the world, and there was not much that we were going to be able to do about it.

The original concept was really quite different. In fact, the writing credit goes to Charlie Haas for the screenplay, and Jericho Stone shares the story credit for the concept - and he also contributed the idea for *MANT*.

**DS:** How do you go about developing a script for so long, going through so many drafts?

**JD:** You work with the person who first suggested the idea; you come up with a script; you see if you like it; you see if it's going anywhere; you take it around and see if anyone's interested. Then you sort of regroup and decide whether you want to do another draft with that writer, or bring in another writer. In this case we went to Ed



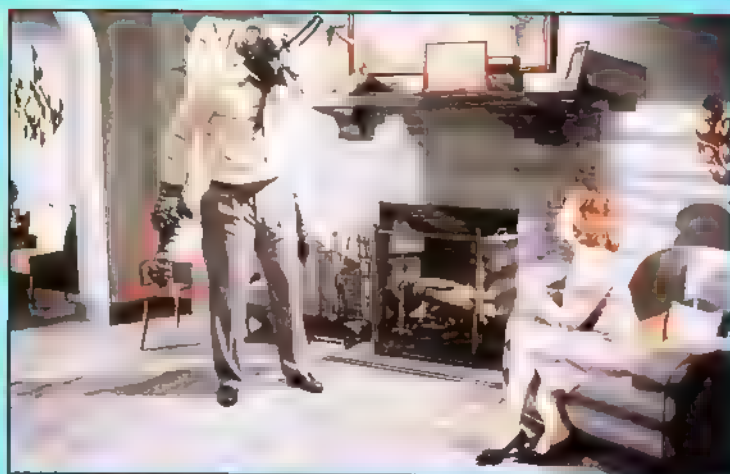


Joe Dante

Naha, who did a version of the script a little bit more like the one we eventually shot, although it was still quite a bit different. Finally, we ended up with Charlie. That's when we added the character of Lawrence Woolsey, the movie producer. In Naha's script it was Boris Selrinky, horror movie star. As it turned out, after that I did GREMLINS II (also written by Haas), and Robert Prosky played a character who was quite a bit like that, so it became apparent we couldn't use him if I made MATINEE. So it evolved into this bigger-than-life movie director

**DS:** How did you hit upon the idea of using William Castle (famous for his promotional gimmicks) as the inspiration for Woolsey?

**JD:** If you're going to make the film-maker a character, I think you have to involve him in the making of the film itself, and this guy is really a huxter. He's almost like David Friedman: He's distributing the movie himself; he's running it for the head of a cinema chain; he's doing everything he can do to get people to go and see it. It's a part of advertising that I think has sadly disappeared. Every movie now has the same ad, no matter where it plays. The advertising stuff is all done by research. There's none of the seat-of-your-pants showmanship that guys like Castle pioneered. He made movie-going an event. Even when the movies themselves weren't events, the fact that they were playing in theatres was. I miss those days, and this



Has Dante been seeing too many FLY movies?

harkens back to them. Nobody does that anymore. Not only that, but they'll give up on a movie in just one weekend. If it doesn't perform, then it's 'hit the road.' Guys like Castle and Corman had a lot of money wrapped up in their pictures and they would do whatever they could to sell them, no matter how badly they might have opened initially.

**DS:** So were you a big fan of Castle?

**JD:** In a way I was. The ballyhoo stunts and gimmicks he had made movies a lot more fun to go to. He sort of revitalised that whole kind of film-making. He was such a colourful figure, it seemed he would be a good role model for this particular character of ours - though Woolsey is also part Jack Arnold and part Roger Corman.

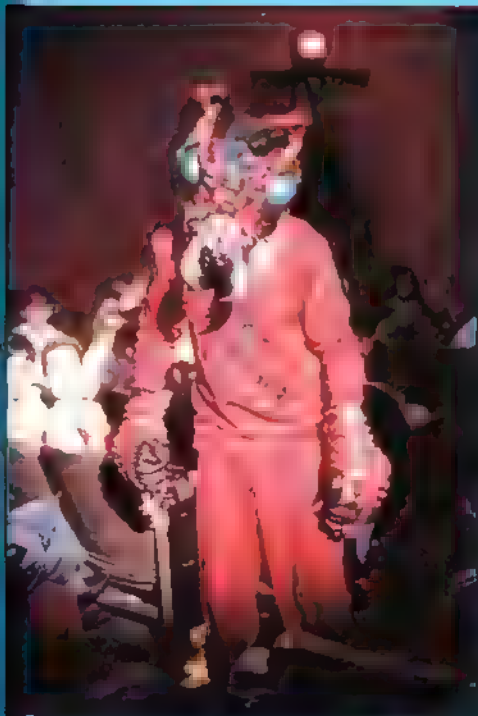
**DS:** The latter similarities are most evident in the film Woolsey is previewing. MANT seems more like a Jack Arnold film than a William Castle film

*MANT makes a personal appearance!*

**JD:** We shot maybe thirty minutes of it, in black and white, of which we used maybe fifteen, and there's also a trailer. It was all meticulously done in the style of the period. You know, it was very much like working for Roger Corman again. It was done very quickly. We painted all the sets black and white so we'd know what they looked like, and we got a bunch of actors who'd appeared in some of these movies at the time. We asked Rick Baker about making a giant ant head for us, but we really couldn't afford him, so he directed us to a guy named Jim McPherson, who designed a more sophisticated ant head than would have been appropriate for 1962; nevertheless, it seems to capture the spirit of the thing. It's sort of an affectionate spoof, but a lot of it is indistinguishable from the real thing. I certainly don't make any malicious fun of it. There's nothing in MANT that isn't in those kinds of movies. You almost don't have to go for the gag, because a lot of the humour is inherent in the absurdity of the images. It's enhanced by the fact that we have access to all the music tracks from the Universal pictures like DEADLY MANTIS and TARANTULA. So we have the authentic music, the authentic look, the authentic dialogue - everything.







*Special effects - '50's style!*

**DS:** Was it difficult to achieve the necessary period detail?

**JD:** What's different about making period movies now is that every place you go has handicapped access ramps. It's something you don't think about until you go looking for locations for a movie. There's not a lot of respect for history in America; they're pretty much into bulldozing everything that's over ten years old. So finding places to shoot that can be made to look like they did thirty years ago is not as easy as it used to be, and in the future it's going to be even harder. We went to Key West, to the actual theatre where this would have taken place, and it had become a disco. Also, Key West is very built-up and touristy, not at all like it was in the 60s. So we ended up shooting in another part of Florida,



*Dante relaxes!*

*Would you buy a ticket?*



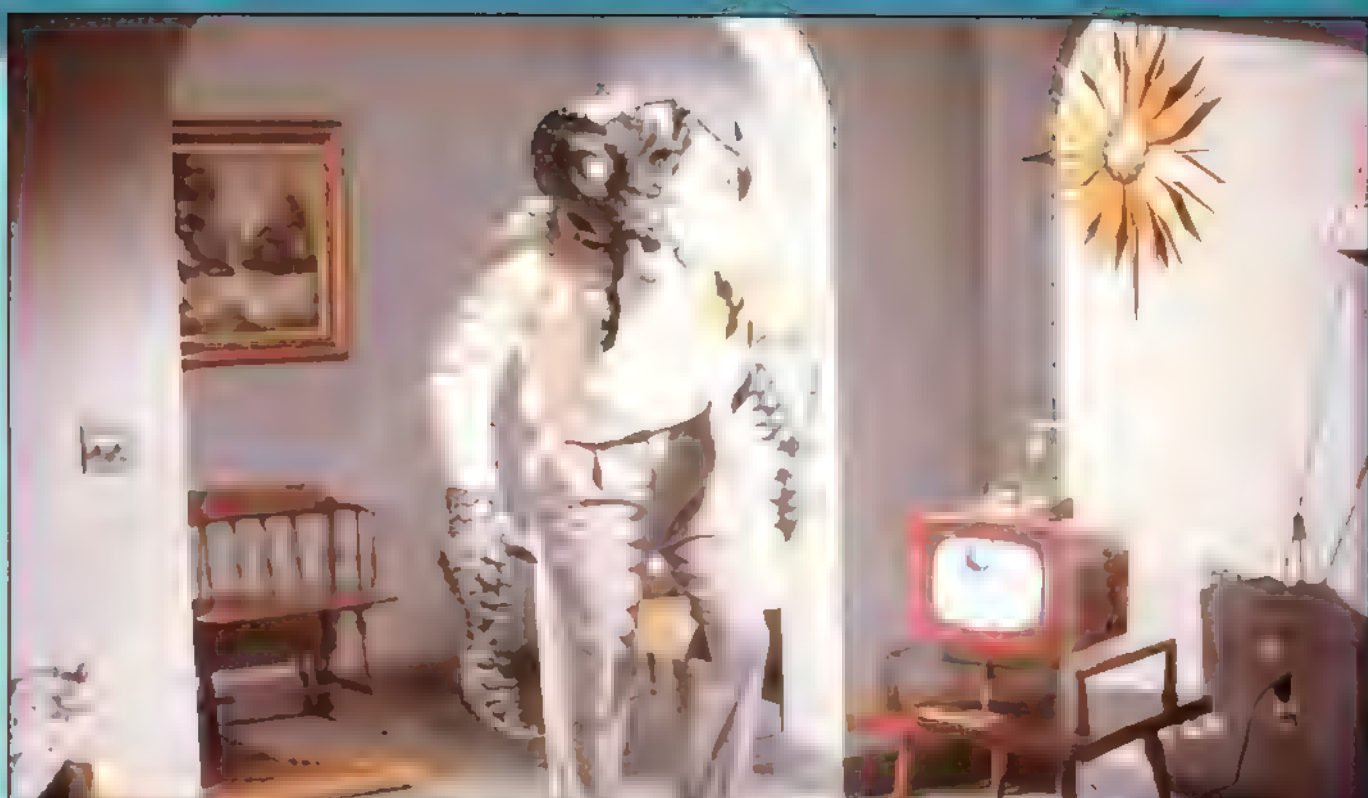
where there was a legitimate theatre that had been built as a silent movie theatre and hadn't changed much at all. We used that as an exterior and built the rest on the backlot at the Orlando Universal studios. The best thing about that was that we could go on the BACK TO THE FUTURE ride every day. It's the greatest ride ever - it ruins you for all the others!

**DS:** Looking at your previous films, MATINEE seems similar to EXPLORERS, which was also a coming of age story...

**JD:** Yeah, but this picture is much more realistic - although EXPLORERS was pretty realistic to me!

**DS:** So you like doing movies from the point of view of children?





*Top and left: monster  
fun from: MATINEE*

**JD:** You just put the camera low for all the shots! (laughs) I guess I do. It was not a conscious decision, but I've certainly done a lot of pictures with kids. Their outlook is refreshing, and I like working with kid actors. Interestingly, for our lead, the main kid, we couldn't find an American who was good enough, so we ended up using a British kid, who does an American accent, and he was pretty much flawless at it. His name's Simon Fenton, he was in *THE POWER OF ONE*.

**DS:** So, is *MATINEE* your way of moving away from the horror and science-fiction genres?

**JD:** It's nice to be able to do something different. Once you've established yourself in one place, they tend to see you as able to only do that thing. This is sort of a half-step away. This doesn't mean I'm not going to do any more genre material. Hopefully, though, it will lead to people saying: 'Hey, this guy can actually make movies without spaceships in them!'

*MATINEE is being released in the UK by Guild, who currently plan to open it in June this year.*





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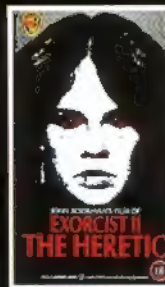
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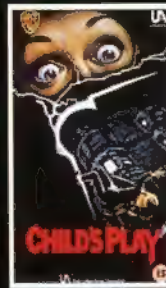
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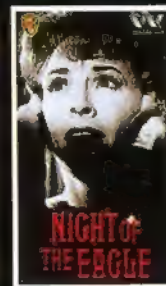
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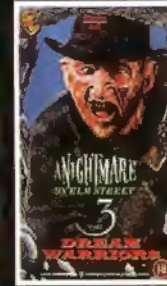
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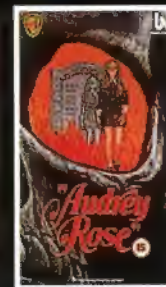
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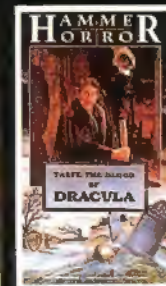
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